

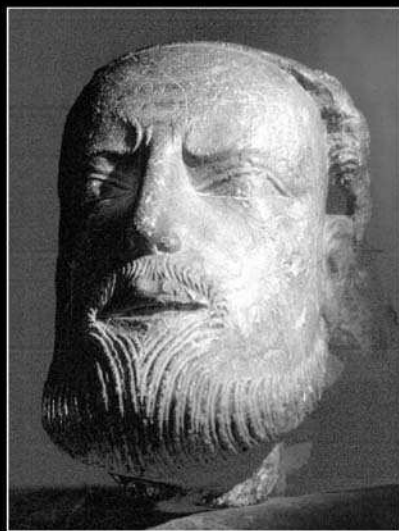
THE NORTHERN WORLD    BRILL

Fagrskinna, a Catalogue of the Kings of Norway

*A Translation with
Introduction and Notes*



Alison Finlay



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FAGRSKINNA
A CATALOGUE OF THE
KINGS OF NORWAY

THE NORTHERN WORLD

North Europe and the Baltic c. 400-1700 AD
Peoples, Economies and Cultures

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VOLUME 7



FAGRSKINNA A CATALOGUE OF THE KINGS OF NORWAY

A Translation with Introduction and Notes

BY

ALISON FINLAY



BRILL
LEIDEN • BOSTON
2004

Illustration on the cover: Head, probably of a *bóndi*, carved in soapstone, c. 1260-80, from Nidaros cathedral, Trondheim. (Nidaros domkirkes restaureringsarbeider)

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Fagrskinna.

Fagrskinna, a catalogue of the Kings of Norway / a translation with introduction and notes by Alison Finlay.

p. cm. — (Northern world, ISSN 1569-1462 ; v. 7)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 90-04-13172-8 (alk. paper)

1. Norway—History—To 1030. 2. Norway—History—1030-1397. I. Title. II. Series.

PT7279.F3E5 2003

839'.63—dc22

2003055918

ISSN 1569-1462

ISBN 90 04 13172 8

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of this translation was completed during a period of research leave in 1999–2000 funded by the AHRB and by Birkbeck College. I would like to thank the Viking Society for Northern Research for permission to use the maps reproduced here, and Anthony Faulkes for adapting them. Anthony Faulkes also read a draft of the translation and made many invaluable corrections and suggestions.

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First side of the surviving fragment of the vellum from which the B version of *Fagrskinna* was copied (NRA 52, fol. 1r).

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Denmark.

Sweden and the Baltic.

INTRODUCTION

As King Hákon Hákonarson of Norway lay on his deathbed in Orkney in 1262, his saga relates that he had books, both in Latin and in Norse, read to him night and day (*Hákonar saga* 1887, 354):

Í sóttinni lét hann fyrst lesa sér Látínubækr. En þá þótti hönunum sér mikil mæða í, at hugsa þar eptir hversu þat þýddi. Lét hann þá lesa fyrir sér Norænu-bækr, nætr ok daga; fyrst Heilagra-mannasögur; ok er þær þraut, lét hann lesa sér Konungatal frá Hálfðani Svarta, ok síðan frá öllum Noregskonungum, hverjum eptir annan . . . Þá er lesit var Konunga-tal framan til Sverris, þá lét hann taka til at lesa Sverris sögu. Var hon þá lesin bæði nætr ok daga, jafnan er hann vakði.

[In his illness he first had Latin books read to him. But then he found it was very tiring for him to think about how it should be translated. Then he had Norse books read to him night and day, first sagas of saints, and when they were finished, he had read to him the catalogue of kings (*konungatal*), about Hálfðan svarti and then about all the kings of Norway one after another . . . Then when the catalogue of kings up to Sverrir had been read, he had the reading of *Sverris saga* begun. It was read to him then both night and day, whenever he was awake.]

He died soon after the reading of that saga had ended. It is more than likely that the *konungatal* which was read to Hákon is the work we now know as *Fagrskinna*, which was referred to in the two medieval manuscripts we know of, both now lost, as *Noregs konungatal* ‘Catalogue of the kings of Norway’ and *Ættartal Noregskonunga* ‘Genealogical catalogue of the kings of Norway’. It is usually considered to have associations with the court of King Hákon (see p. 000 below); and the end point of its narrative is fixed at the beginning of the reign of Hákon’s grandfather King Sverrir in 1177. *Sverris saga* was probably completed before 1210, and the statement in that saga itself that its first part was written by the Icelandic bishop Karl Jónsson under the close personal supervision of King Sverrir¹ has been taken to

¹ ‘er þat upphaf bókarinnar er ritat er eptir þeirri bók er fyrst ritaði Karl ábóti Jónsson, en yfir sat sjálfir Sverrir konungr, ok réð fyrir hvat rita skyldi’ (*Sverris saga* 1; my normalisation) [The beginning of the book is what was written according to the book which Abbot Karl Jónsson wrote, and King Sverrir supervised it himself and decided what should be written.]

suggest a model for the composition of *Fagrskinna*, possibly at the instigation of Hákon himself, to supply a complementary account of the earlier history of his kingdom (Indrebø 1917, 277–78, 284; *Fsk*, cxxiii, cxxvii–cxxxi).

FAGRSKINNA AND ITS SOURCES

As Theodore Andersson has said, ‘Unlike the family sagas, which almost never tell the same story twice, the kings’ sagas tell the same story, especially the biographies of the Norwegian kings, many times’ (Andersson 1985, 197). The development of the genre of *konungasögur* [kings’ sagas] can be traced from early in the twelfth century, with the treatment of this material in many forms, both in Latin and the vernacular, by writers both in Iceland and in Norway. It includes both biographies of individual rulers, sometimes hagiographical in bias, and surveys such as *Fagrskinna*, which are built on the superstructure of the earliest chronological outlines enumerating the rulers within the context of their descent from Haraldr hárfagri. It is arguable that the primary significance of *Fagrskinna* is the position it occupies in this literary evolution. Where Snorri is more radical in his treatment of his sources, and a strong case has been made for the dependence of *Morkinskinna* on oral material, information about which is difficult to recover (Indrebø 1938–39, 58–79; *Morkinskinna* 2000, 57–65), it is generally accepted that—with the exception of skaldic poems that he may have known in oral versions—the author of *Fagrskinna* was a conservative arranger of earlier written sources. In the words of Indrebø (1917, 111),

Vi kann setja upp til kritisk regel: Av innhaldet i Fgsk. bør ein berre føra so mykje direkte tilbake til munnleg tradisjon som ein absolutt er nøydd til; d.v.s. det som ein ikkje med rimeleg grunn kann føra tilbake til skrivne sogor eller skaldekvæde.

[We can establish this as a critical rule: Only as much as is absolutely necessary of the content of *Fagrskinna* is to be traced back to oral tradition; that is to say only what cannot reasonably be traced back to written narratives or skaldic poems.]

A brief account will be given here of the evolution of the genre, with particular emphasis on the relationship of *Fagrskinna* with the works used as its sources.

Most scholarly scrutiny of the *konungasögur* has been devoted to unravelling the chronological and textual relationships of the various texts: not only the interrelationship of the surviving histories, but their evolution out of the dismayingly large number of works that we know of in greater or lesser detail, but which no longer exist.² A summary account of the history of the kings' sagas can read like an astronomer's chart of the heavens, so plentiful are the stars designating works known or surmised to have existed, but of which no text now survives. Of the immediate vernacular sources of *Fagrskinna*, for instance, only *Ágrip* survives in a form that we dare to suppose reasonably represents its original, but even that is incomplete at beginning and end, and the surviving version can be shown to have some discrepancies from what must have been known to Snorri and the author of *Fagrskinna* (see below, pp. 7–8). *Fagrskinna* also draws heavily on Oddr Snorrason's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, originally written about 1190 in Latin and now surviving only in versions of a translation into Icelandic (see below, pp. 9–10). The last part of *Fagrskinna* follows *Morkinskinna* very closely, but the *Morkinskinna* we have now is not the version that was used by the author of *Fagrskinna* (see below, pp. 12–13). Other sources, such as the **Hryggjarstykk*i of Eiríkr Oddsson, exist now only in name: it is named by Snorri as a source for some of the events of the 1130s, but it is unclear whether it was a hagiographically-inspired life of the martyred pretender Sigurðr slæmbir or covered events over the thirty years following his death as well (see below, pp. 10–11).

The works believed to have initiated the recording of Norwegian dynastic history, the *konunga ævi* [lives of kings] by the twelfth-century Icelanders Sæmundr Sigfússon (d. 1133) and Ari Þorgilsson (d. 1148), are both likely to have consisted of brief regnal lists with a chronological bias. Both the fulness of their information and the extent of their influence on later writers are matters for speculation.³ Sæmundr's

² For a convenient survey and bibliography see Andersson 1985; see also Knirk 1993.

³ Sæmundr is referred to as an authority by some later historians, most notably in one of three surviving redactions (AM 310, 4to) of the Icelandic translation of Oddr Snorrason's *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar*, which cites a sentence attributed to Sæmundr: Þessa þings getr Sæmundr prestur hinn fróði er agetr var at speki. oc mælti sua. A aðru ari rikis Olafs T. s. samnaði hann saman mikitt folk oc atti þing a Staði a Dragseiði. oc let eigi af at boða monnum retta tru fyrr en þeir tocu skim. Olafur konungr hepti miok ran oc stulpi oc mandrap. hann gaf oc goð log

work is no longer extant—indeed, it has been argued (Storm 1873, 15) that it never existed in written form—but something of its content and structure can be deduced from the poem *Nóregs konunga tal*, composed about 1190 to the greater glory of the Icelandic chieftain (and Sæmundr's grandson) Jón Loptsson, whose descent it traces from Norwegian royal stock.⁴ The poem acknowledges Sæmundr as the source of its account of the rulers from Haraldr hárfagri to Magnús inn góði:

Nú hefk talt
 tíu landreka,
 þás hverr vas
 frá Haraldi;
 intak svá
 ævi þeira
 sem Sæmundr
 sagði enn fróði.
 (*Skj*, B I p. 582, st. 40)

[Now I have enumerated ten rulers, each of whom was descended from Haraldr; I have told their lives as Sæmundr the Wise related them.]

This has been taken to demarcate the chronological scope of Sæmundr's work, though the poem's enumeration of rulers continues down to the reign of Sverrir. The poem's content, essentially a list of the length of the rulers' reigns, with sparse details of their lives and (especially) deaths and burial places, is supposed also to have formed the bulk of the *ævi* related by Sæmundr. Sæmundr's work is presumed to have been in Latin, since Ari, whose work must have been

folkinu oc goðan sið. Sua hefir Sæmundr ritað um Olaf konung isinni bok. (Oddr 114)

[This assembly is mentioned by the priest Sæmundr the Wise who was outstanding in his wisdom, and he said this: 'In the second year of the reign of Óláfr Tryggvason he assembled a great multitude and held an assembly at Drageið at Staðr, and he did not stop preaching the true faith to people until they accepted baptism. King Óláfr greatly hindered robbery and theft and killing. He also gave good laws and customs to the people.' So Sæmundr wrote about King Óláfr in his book.]

If the reference is genuine it attests not only to a written work (*bok*) by Sæmundr but to a fuller narrative than is implied by the summary version in *Nóregs konunga tal*.

⁴ See Ólafía Einarsdóttir 1964, especially chapter 10. *Nóregs konunga tal* is preserved in *Flateyjarbók*, II 520–28.

composed later, is referred to by Snorri Sturluson in *Heimskringla* as the first writer of history in the vernacular.⁵ Snorri's reference could apply to the surviving vernacular version of Ari's *Íslendingabók*; whether the earlier version referred to by Ari himself, which included *áttar-tala* [genealogy] and *konunga ævi* [lives of kings], was in Latin or the vernacular, is unknown.⁶ The extent to which the works of Sæmundr and Ari influenced the so-called 'synoptic histories', written in Norway, is a much-debated question which has not escaped an element of national bias, as writers have argued for (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1937) and against (Ellehøj 1965, 198–258; Bjarni Guðnason 1977; Lange 1989) a Norwegian school of historical writing existing independently of Icelandic sources.

Considerable attention has been paid to the suggestion first made by Gjessing (1896, 129–32) that *Fagrskinna* was directly influenced by Sæmundr's history.⁷ Most striking is the parallel between verse 40 of *Nóregs konunga tal*, cited above, and the summary placed in *Fagrskinna* at the beginning of the joint rule of Magnús inn góði and Haraldr harðráði:⁸

When Haraldr Sigurðarson took up the rule of Norway with his kinsman King Magnús, a hundred and twenty two years had passed since the death of Haraldr inn hárfagri. In all this time Norway had been ruled by leaders who were all descended from King Haraldr, except when Danish or Swedish kings were ruling, although these leaders who were descended from King Haraldr were from various branches of the family. But since King Haraldr Sigurðarson became king, the kingship

⁵ 'Ari prestur inn fróði Þorgilsson, Gellissonar, ritaði fyrstr manna hér á landi at norrœnu máli frœði, bæði forna ok nýja . . . Hann ritaði, sem hann sjálf segir, ævi Nóregskonunga . . .' (*Hkr* I 5–6) [The priest Ari the Wise, son of Þorgils, son of Gellir, was the first man in this country to write learned material, both old and new, in the Norse language . . . He wrote, as he himself says, lives of the kings of Norway . . .]

⁶ The first version of *Íslendingabók* must have been written between 1122 and 1133, since Ari says that it was written for the bishops Ketill (Þorsteinsson, who became bishop in 1122) and Þorlákr (Rúnólfsson, who died in 1133); the second probably four or five years later (E. O. G. Turville-Petre 1953, 93).

⁷ Indrebø (1917, 47) also argued for the direct dependence of *Fagrskinna* on Sæmundr. Finnur Jónsson (1920–24, II 639) conceded that a relationship existed, but maintained that it was not direct.

⁸ See also *Historia Norvegiae* ch. 15: 'Ásta bore him Harald, a man of deep perspicacity, a great expert in the science of warfare, and from him, as if along a thread, descended the glorious Norwegian line in its genealogical pattern up to the present' (*HN* 2003, 87).

of Norway has been held exclusively by his descendants, though there has been some division of the family into branches in their descent from him (p. 197 below).

Like *Nóregs konunga tal*, *Fagrskinna* chooses the inception of the reign of Haraldr harðráði Sigurðarson to reiterate the descent from Haraldr hárfagri of the rulers so far treated, and goes on—as the Icelandic poem does—to establish those that follow as members of the new genealogical branch initiated by Haraldr harðráði. It is more difficult to confirm that the figure of 122 years named in *Fagrskinna* is based on Sæmundr's enumeration, since the treatment of chronology in *Fagrskinna* is far from systematic; it makes no mention, for example, of the length of the reigns of Haraldr gráfeldr, Hákon jarl Sigurðarson or Óláfr Tryggvason. But what information it does provide can be shown to correspond broadly to the timetable outlined in the Icelandic poem.⁹

Whatever their relation with these early Icelandic texts, three brief 'synoptic histories' represent the production of historical works in twelfth-century Norway. Only one of them survives complete: the *Historia de Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensium* [An Account of the Ancient History of the Norwegian Kings] by Theodoricus Monachus. This is a history in Latin, brief but with many digressions, of the Norwegian kings from Haraldr hárfagri to Sigurðr Jórsalafari (d. 1130). Theodoricus (Þórir or Þjóðrekr?) was probably a Benedictine monk at Niðarhólmr who wrote the work for presentation to Archbishop Eysteinn of Niðaróss (modern Trondheim) (1161–88).¹⁰ He claims to be the first to write down the material he records, naming as sources the memories preserved by Icelanders and in particular their poems, though he may not have known these directly.¹¹ He may also have had

⁹ According to calculations cited by Bjarni Einarsson (*Fsk*, lxxi–lxxiii), the corresponding period in *Nóregs konunga tal*, starting with the reign of Eiríkr blóðøx, amounts to 125 years; the discrepancy of three years can be accounted for by the fact that Eiríkr blóðøx had already reigned jointly with his father, Haraldr hárfagri, for that length of time *before* Haraldr's death.

¹⁰ See the introduction by Peter Foote to Theodoricus 1998.

¹¹ 'I have deemed it worthwhile . . . to write down in brief these few details . . . as I have been able to learn by assiduous inquiry from the people among whom in particular the remembrance of these matters is believed to thrive—namely those whom we call Icelanders, who preserve them as much celebrated themes in their ancient poems . . . I would assuredly have rather seen someone other than myself act as the chronicler of these events, but since to date this has not happened, I preferred that it should be me rather than no one' (Theodoricus 1998, 1, 55; see also 5).

access to regnal lists and chronologies such as those attributed to Ari and Sæmundr. Another Latin text, now called *Historia Norvegiae*, was probably originally more ambitious in scope but survives only in a fragmentary manuscript from 1500 or later. From its own claim to be ‘hucusque Latino eloquio intemptatum’ [hitherto unattempted in the Latin tongue] (HN 2003, 50–51) it would appear to pre-date Theodoricus, a supposition supported by its latest editor who argues for a date of 1160–75.¹² After a geographical preface, it deals briefly with the history of Norway up to 1015, and probably concluded with an account of its conversion to Christianity.

While these two texts owe as much to the currency of the Latin learning of their time as to oral or written vernacular sources,¹³ they are clearly related in some way to *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sögum* [Summary of the Histories of the Kings of Norway], a short history written in Norse probably in Trøndelag, probably *c.* 1190.¹⁴ It now survives incomplete in a thirteenth-century Icelandic manuscript, but its original chronological range was likely to have been identical with that of *Fagrskinna*: from the reign of Hálfðan svarti to the accession of Sverrir in 1177. Seven verses in the vernacular are cited, though one is misinterpreted;¹⁵ and the author is believed to have used local

¹² HN 2003, 11–24; this proposed dating is Mortensen’s refinement on the date of 1150 proposed by Ekrem in this joint edition. The argument rests among other things on the independence of the text from Theodoricus and other works associated with Trondheim; this leads the editors to suggest an origin in an ecclesiastical or political centre elsewhere in (Denmark or) Norway, possibly in the region of Viken. It has been argued from the similarities between its account of the descent of the Norwegian dynasty from legendary Swedish kings and the genealogical list at the end of the surviving version of Ari’s *Íslendingabók* that *Historia Norvegiae* was directly related to Ari’s lost work (Ellehøj 1965, 109–41, 293–94).

¹³ *Historia Norvegiae* has been described as ‘a respectable pioneering effort from a European periphery in the process of identifying itself in relation to the centre—in the literary medium of the centre: a narrative in schooled Latin, drawing on foreign and ancient learning’ (HN 2003, 8).

¹⁴ ‘In places *Ágrip*’s text is virtually identical with that of Theodoricus, while in others it seems to agree rather with *Historia Norvegiae*. The nature and number of correspondences between the three point to a written, rather than an oral, connection, and Siegfried Beyschlag’s theory [1950, 247–48]—that the three synoptics independently preserve an established oral tradition—has few adherents . . . Generally . . . *Ágrip*’s author is thought to have made direct use of Theodoricus, translating passages virtually word for word, while the similarities between *Ágrip* and *Historia Norvegiae* are explained by most scholars as the result of their having a common source’ (Matthew Driscoll, *Ágrip* 1995, xiv–xv).

¹⁵ *Ágrip* 1985, 4. The author interprets the word *skeiðarbrandr*, a poetic word for the prow or some other part of a ship (Jesch 2001, 147–48) as the name of a

(probably oral) Trøndelag tradition, for instance for the story of Haraldr hárfagri's infatuation with the Lappish Snjófriðr (Snæfriðr), later incorporated almost word for word by Snorri in *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* I 125–27).

Although *Fagrskinna* lacks this colourful story, its author seems to have used *Ágrip* as a source. He probably had access to a better text than that of the single surviving (and incomplete) manuscript, but it is often difficult to distinguish between direct literary influence and derivation from a common source. Gustav Indrebø, who studied the question in most detail, discerned varying levels of influence in different parts of the text (1917, 42):

Etterrøkjingi vaar faar den endskapen at Fgsk. har lagt Ágr. (ved sida av andre kjeldor) til grunn for sogone um Halvdan Svarte, Harald Haarfagre og Harald Graafeld og har brukt det til sidekjelde for sogone um Olav Kyrre, Magnus Berrføtt og Inge Krokrygg. For saga um Haakon den gode sitt vedkomande gaar dei tvo verki tilbake paa eitt og same tridje verk. Skyldskapen i saga um Haakon jarl er meir indirekte. Under ihopsetjingi av dei sogone som ikkje syner serleg paaverknad fraa Ágr., har Fgsk.-forfattaren vel havt dette verket liggjande for seg, men ikkje funne det tenlegt eller naudsynt aa taka noko upp fraa det.

[Our investigation has produced the conclusion that *Fagrskinna* used *Ágrip* (alongside other sources) as the basis for the sagas of Hálfdan svarti, Haraldr hárfagri and Haraldr gráfeldr and used it as a subsidiary source for the sagas of Óláfr kyrri, Magnús berfœttr and Ingi. For the saga concerning Hákon inn góði the two works go back to the same third work. The relationship in the saga of jarl Hákon is more indirect. For the composition of the sagas which show no particular influence from *Ágrip*, the author of *Fagrskinna* may well have had that work in front of him but did not find it useful or necessary to adopt anything from it.]

Alongside the production of these summary histories another strand in the writing of early histories of Norway was developing in the form of biographies of individual kings. To a large extent this development had its roots in the hagiographical recording of the lives of the two royal martyrs, Óláfr inn helgi Haraldsson (d. 1030) and his predecessor, Óláfr Tryggvason (d. 1000). Early evidence of the grow-

chieftain against whom Haraldr hárfagri fought. This apparent ineptitude in skaldic interpretation has been used as evidence that the author was not an Icelander (E. O. G. Turville-Petre 1953, 173).

ing cult of sanctity surrounding Óláfr Haraldsson survives in the poem *Glælognskviða* from as early as c. 1032; this refers to miracles ascribed to the saint that are also related in early collections of miracle stories.¹⁶ Surviving vernacular descendants of these are the collection of miracles in the *Old Norwegian Homily Book*,¹⁷ and the fragmentary remains of the Icelandic *Oldest saga of St Óláfr*, written c. 1200. Something very similar to the *Oldest saga* is preserved complete in the Norwegian *Legendary saga of St Óláfr*, of about the same date.¹⁸ It is not clear that either is a direct source for *Fagrskinna*, which seems to follow a lost version of the same material. Snorri's two versions of *Óláfs saga helga* (the so-called *Separate saga*, and the shorter revision of this which forms the central third of *Heimskringla*) follow a version, lost apart from some brief passages in *Flateyjarbók*, by the Icelandic priest Styrmir Kárason. Snorri is often given credit for secularising and rationalising the hagiographical material of his sources (see Phelpstead 2000), but it could be argued that it is only in *Fagrskinna*, in which, as Bjarni Einarsson has said (*Fsk*, xc), 'auðsætt er . . . að þessi kaffi Fagrskinnu er ágrip eitt af lengri sögu' [it is obvious . . . that this section of *Fagrskinna* is no more than a summary of a longer narrative] and in which 'no special prominence is given to his story' (Heinrichs 1993, 448) that a truly secular perspective on Óláfr's history is taken.

We are on firmer ground with the *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar* written by the monk Oddr Snorrason at Þingeyrar in Iceland, probably also c. 1190, although as already stated, this Latin work survives only in three versions of a translation into Icelandic. Oddr's aim was to glorify Óláfr as missionary king and precursor of his venerated namesake:

oc a env fimta ari hans rikis hellt O. konungr nafna synom vndir skirn
oc tók hann af þeim helga brvnnu i þa liking sem Ioan baptisti gerðe
viþ drottin. oc sva sem hann var hans fyrir rennari. sva var oc O.
konungr T. s. fyrir rennari ens helga O. konungs (Oddr, 1).

¹⁶ See Carl Phelpstead's introduction to *The Passion and Miracles of the Blessed Óláfr* in *HN* 2001, xxv–xlv. Ten stanzas of Þórarinn loftunga's *Glælognskviða* [Calm Sea Poem] are preserved in Snorri's sagas of St Óláfr; the first stanza is cited also in *Fagrskinna* (p. 161 below; *Skj*, B I 300–01).

¹⁷ *Samal Norsk Homiliebok*. *Cod. AM* 619 4°.

¹⁸ Jónas Kristjánsson (1976) examines the relation between the *Oldest saga* and the *Legendary saga* and argues that the *Oldest saga* was probably a direct source of *Fagrskinna*.

[and in the fifth year of his reign King Óláfr carried out the baptism of his namesake, and raised him from the holy font after the pattern of what John the Baptist did to the Lord, and just as he was his forerunner, so also was Óláfr Tryggvason the forerunner of King Óláfr the Saint.]

The reference to the belief, traditional in Iceland, that Óláfr Tryggvason was the godfather of St Óláfr,¹⁹ along with the self-conscious biblical parallel, is symptomatic of Oddr's hagiographical intent. *Fagrskinna* relies almost exclusively on Oddr's saga as a source for its account of Óláfr Tryggvason, but all the fantastic elements and inflationary rhetoric are stripped away; little remains, in fact, other than a close paraphrase of Oddr's account of Óláfr's defeat in the great battle at Svǫldr, an emphasis which contributes to the common characterisation of *Fagrskinna* as a 'battle saga' (*orustusaga*; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson in *Hkr* I xviii). It has been shown (Morgenstern 1890, Indrebø 1917, 88–91) that the author of *Fagrskinna* made use not of Oddr's Latin original but of a version of the Icelandic translation similar to that now in Stockholm (Stock. perg. 4to no. 18).

It is difficult to assess to what extent hagiography was the goal of a lost history, the **Hryggjarstykki* by the Icelander Eiríkr Oddsson, who is acknowledged as a source in both *Heimskringla* and *Morkinskinna*.²⁰ Bjarni Guðnason has argued that Eiríkr's book covered only the years 1136–39, focusing on the martyrdom of the Norwegian pretender Sigurðr slæmbir; cases had earlier been made for its having a more synoptic scope, extending to the death of Ingí Haraldsson in 1161, or to 1177.²¹ *Fagrskinna* is indebted to **Hryggjarstykki* both as a direct source and indirectly via the influence of **Hryggjarstykki* on *Morkinskinna*, but it is difficult to distinguish the two kinds of influence. Indrebø (1917, 50–53) finds instances where the author of *Fagrskinna* was working from two sources, most likely *Morkinskinna* and a version of **Hryggjarstykki*.²²

¹⁹ See also chapter 60 of Snorri's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* (*Hkr* I 310).

²⁰ *Mork* 419; *Hkr* III 313, 317, 318–19 (where the book's title is also given), 320.

²¹ Bjarni Guðnason 1978. The title of this study, *Fyrsta sagan*, reflects Bjarni's claim for an early date of *c.* 1150 for **Hryggjarstykki*, and incidentally for its status as the first Icelandic saga. For earlier arguments see Indrebø 1917, 49–50, Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1937; in his introduction to *Hkr* III (lxiv–lxvii) Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson suggested that the work originally ended with the death of Sigurðr slæmbir but that in a later version Eiríkr extended the narrative to 1161.

²² Bjarni Guðnason (1978, 54–55) argued that the authors of *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*

More shadowy possible sources are the individual biographies of this or that king of Norway, the existence of which has been postulated at one time or another as sources for the compilations and historical surveys, but for which there is little hard evidence. Theodore Andersson, among others, has written sceptically about such assumptions, which he attributes to a reluctance among philologists to confront the nature of oral sources (1985, 218–219; *Morkinskinna* 2000, 57; see also Indrebø 1938–39, 58–79). The only such suggestion that needs serious consideration as a possible source for *Fagrskinna* is that of an independent **Hákonar saga góða*. The existence of such a saga, possibly extending also to Hákon's brother Eiríkr blóðøx, was suggested by Indrebø (1917, 35–36, 39–40) to explain the comparatively full account in *Fagrskinna*, diverging in some respects from *Ágrip*, of Hákon's reign. The suggestion is seemingly supported by a reference in *Egils saga*, where it is said that 'Hákon konungr fór í þeirri ferð víða um Gautland . . . svá sem sagt er í sögu hans' [On that expedition King Hákon travelled widely around Gautland . . . as is told in his saga].²³ Counter-arguments have been put, including Indrebø's own *volte-face* (1922, 50; see Andersson 1985, 218–19), but the most recent editor of *Fagrskinna*, Bjarni Einarsson, reaffirms the likely existence of this saga (*Fsk*, lxxviii). It has also been suggested that the sudden cessation in *Fagrskinna* of the citing of skaldic verse for historical verification in the course of the history of Magnús berfœttr could be explained by the author's use of a lost saga of that king (which did not included verse) (*Morkinskinna* 2000, 41).

From the point at which the history of King Magnús Ólafsson begins, the influence of *Morkinskinna* on *Fagrskinna* is obvious. *Morkinskinna*, written in Iceland about 1220, is the first of the kings' saga texts that can be described as a compendium, dealing more extensively than did the earlier synoptic texts with the reigns of those kings whose lives span the years 1035–1177 (though the existing manuscript breaks off with the events of 1157). At times both *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* follow *Morkinskinna* almost verbatim. But although this much is evident from the surviving version of *Morkinskinna*, once

and *Heimskringla* used three different versions of *Hryggjarstykki* for the life of Sigurðr slembidjákn.

²³ *Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar* 1933, 239. If Jónas Kristjánsson is correct, however, in his contention that *Egils saga* was written after *Heimskringla* (1977, 470–72), the reference could be to *Hákonar saga góða* in *Heimskringla*.

again the textual relationship is not simple. For the text of *Morkinskinna* that now exists dates from *c.* 1275, and its relationship with its original has been the subject of scholarly dispute. Not least because of the absence in *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* of most of the *þættir*, short episodes usually relating encounters between Icelanders and kings, most notably King Haraldr harðráði of Norway, which in the extant *Morkinskinna* ‘function as a sort of opposition literature’ (*Morkinskinna* 2000, 80), it has been supposed that these episodes, as well as a number of skaldic verses also absent from the later histories, were interpolated at a later stage.²⁴ But in their recent translation of *Morkinskinna* Andersson and Gade make out a case for the presence of most of these episodes in *Morkinskinna* from the start:

The *þættir* and incidental episodes are so numerous that it seems unlikely that they are supervenient as a rule. We would have to believe that for some reason, interpolation became epidemic in *Morkinskinna* manuscripts but that this epidemic spared the manuscript traditions of *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* during the same period. It seems more likely that *Morkinskinna* was characterized by anecdotal digressions from the outset, although this proclivity may have opened the door to further insertions at a later date (*Morkinskinna* 2000, 13).

From the receptiveness of *Morkinskinna* to anecdotes and verses, they build up a picture of an author who is ‘more of a storyteller than a critical historian like Snorri and the author of *Fagrskinna*’ (57), and characterize its mode of composition:

The author seems to have ‘collected’ oral materials from a variety of sources and set them down in a somewhat arbitrary way not dictated by a preexisting biographical structure but guided only by a rough chronology. The biographical structure that eventually emerged was more the work of *Fagrskinna*’s author and of Snorri, who tried to simplify the episodic disorganization of *Morkinskinna* by stripping the *þættir* away, clarifying the political issues, and emphasizing the underlying biographical features (64).

²⁴ For a review of earlier discussion see *Morkinskinna* 2000, 11–24. Indrebø (1917, 22–30) argued from the absence in *Fagrskinna* of passages in the extant *Morkinskinna* which are derived from *Ágrip* that the author of *Fagrskinna* used a version of *Morkinskinna* in which these passages had not yet been interpolated; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (1937, 145–46) found further evidence in *Morkinskinna* of interpolation from *Ágrip*. Ármann Jakobsson (2002, 44–56) argues that the difference between the existing and original versions of *Morkinskinna* is less significant than has been supposed.

The technique this attributes to the author of *Fagrskinna* of reproducing closely those parts of the source which struck him as relevant, while stripping away whole episodes that did not, is certainly paralleled in *Fagrskinna*'s treatment of other sources, such as Oddr Snorrason's saga of Óláfr Tryggvason. Here *Fagrskinna* reproduces the more spectacular elements of the battle of Svöldr, in which the king dies (or rather disappears after plunging overboard into the sea), but passes over almost in silence the saga's detailed account of his proselytising activities as the bringer of Christianity to Scandinavia.

By this reckoning it was the author of *Fagrskinna* who first presented a historical narrative whose structure is dictated by principles of order and proportion. Viewed purely as secular history, its structure is more balanced than that of *Heimskringla*, which is heavily overweighted by its centrepiece, the Saga of St Óláfr. Carl Phelpstead (2000) has recently suggested that the common description of Snorri's presentation of St Óláfr as essentially secular is an exaggeration. It is *Fagrskinna* which, while referring briefly to the posthumous miracles inspired by the king's cult, stands remarkably independent of the hagiographic sources which must have been behind it to concentrate on the politics and power struggles of his reign. This has little to do with brevity, since even the account of Óláfr in the much shorter *Ágrip* emphasizes his conversion and martyrdom.

Other sources went against the grain of the author's sober historical intent in different ways. The material for chapters 19–22, concerning the establishment by the Danish king Haraldr Gormsson of the legendary fortress Jónsborg, the forming of the fellowship of heroic warriors who manned it, their invasion of Norway and defeat by Jarl Hákon at the battle of Hjørungavágr, derive from the 'entertaining fiction' *Jónsvíkinga saga*.²⁵ The saga was written in Iceland c. 1200, but survives now only in later manuscripts. The one most closely resembling the material in *Fagrskinna* is AM 510 4to, from the sixteenth century; this represents a combination of two redactions, one known elsewhere from the earliest surviving manuscript of the saga, AM 291 4to, and an otherwise lost redaction that was probably the text used by the author of *Fagrskinna*.²⁶ He probably

²⁵ Ólafur Halldórsson 1993, 344.

²⁶ For exhaustive discussion of the relationship between *Fagrskinna* and *Jónsvíkinga saga* see Indrebø 1917, 58–80.

intertwined this material with some from a now lost source, the **Hlaðajarla saga* [saga of the jarls of Hlaðir]. The sequence derived from *Jómsvíkinga saga* is in fact immediately followed by what is probably a reference to this text: ‘That is counted as Eiríkr’s first glorious exploit in his saga’. (p. 110) The Eiríkr referred to is the son of the vanquisher of the Jómsvíkingar, Jarl Hákon Sigurðarson, infamous in many saga texts as the last reigning champion of paganism in Norway, but treated as something of a hero in *Fagrskinna*. The reference to a saga about Eiríkr is in the context of a dispute between father and son—‘Jarl Hákon and Jarl Eiríkr were always on bad terms after that’—and it is likely that the lost saga dealt with at least these two members of the Hlaðir dynasty. It is also assumed to be the source for what Theodore Andersson (1985, 215) has called ‘a narrative gem’ in *Fagrskinna*, the episode (chapter 15) in which Jarl Hákon uses his notorious cunning to get the better of the Danish king Haraldr Gormsson, his nephew Gull-Harald and the Norwegian Haraldr gráfeldr, in order to eliminate his rivals for the dominion of Norway (see Indrebø 1917, 144–52). From the skill and subtlety of this passage Andersson deduces ‘that **Hlaðajarla saga* belongs to the period of full flowering and not to the formative period’ of kings’ saga composition (1985, 215).

The existence of a lost **Knúts saga* as source for some of the material intervening between that derived from *Óláfs saga helga* and that from the beginning of *Morkinskinna* was suggested by Finnur Jónsson (1920–24, II 634), and receives some support from a reference in *Heimskringla*: ‘svá sem ritat er í sögu Knúts ins gamla, at hann lét drepa Úlf jarl, mág sinn, í Hróiskeldu’ (*Hkr* III, 36) [as is written in the saga of Knútr the Old, that he had his brother-in-law Úlfr killed at Hróiskelda]. This event is related laconically in chapter 37 of *Fagrskinna*.

In chapter 48 there is a reference to the ‘great discord between [the Orkney jarl] Rognvaldr and his father’s brother Þorfinnr, as is told in the sagas of the Jarls (*í Jarla sögunum*)’ (p. 173 below). The text referred to is probably a version of *Orkneyinga saga*, but the reference to it is quite likely to be taken over from *Morkinskinna* (see note 491 to the translation). Indrebø (1917, 103–07) concluded that the author of *Fagrskinna* did not know, or need not have known, *Orkneyinga saga*.

The writing of the kings’ sagas is a phenomenon that has been appropriated, sometimes with a degree of partisanship, for both

Norway and Iceland. It is generally agreed that the genre began with the Icelandic writers Sæmundr and Ari, but the extent of their influence on later writers is less clear, as is the question whether there was a separate school of early Norwegian saga writing. The Norwegian monk Theodoricus acknowledged his debt to the learning of the Icelanders, but also claimed to have recorded ‘things not seen but heard’ (*non visa sed audita*) (Theodoricus 1998, 2). At first sight this suggests that all Theodoricus’s sources were oral, but it has been pointed out (Bjarni Guðnason 1977; Andersson 1979) that this commonplace phrase may have been used to distinguish between secondary, written sources and those derived even ultimately from oral reports, which would include accounts such as the early histories of Sæmundr and Ari, and that Theodoricus may well have known these early Icelandic works. *Ágrip*, though it survives in an Icelandic manuscript, seems to have its interest centred on Niðaróss (Trondheim) and is generally assumed to be Norwegian, though there is no agreement on whether it is based on a lost Norwegian history or has Icelandic roots in the works of Ari and/or Sæmundr.

The same might be said of *Fagrskinna*. Its general orientation suggests its origin in Norway, and the only surviving medieval manuscript fragment of the earlier of the two versions has been located in Niðaróss on palaeographical grounds (see below, p. 36), but it has often been suggested that the author was an Icelander working in Norway. Finnur Jónsson’s similar, but now unfashionable, insistence on the Icelandic authorship of *Ágrip* has been ridiculed by Matthew Driscoll:

The argument is wonderfully circular: no Norwegian is known to have written a historical text in the vernacular—after all, Sverrir and Hákon Hákonarson both imported Icelanders to write their sagas—ergo, no historical text in the vernacular can have been written by a Norwegian (*Ágrip* 1995, xi).

But the precedent set by *Sverris saga* and *Hákonar saga gamla* does merit consideration, in the absence of known Norwegian historians. A more telling argument for Icelandic authorship is the author’s knowledge of, and ability to interpret, skaldic verse, which is assumed to have been largely an Icelandic accomplishment.²⁷

²⁷ Jakobsen (1970, 92) pointed to the discovery of *dróttkvætt* verses carved on rune sticks in Bergen as evidence that ‘det har sikkert vært flere nordmenn på Hákon

Indrebø argued convincingly for the origin of *Fagrskinna* in Norway, and most probably in Trøndelag, but was unable to make a strong case for Norwegian authorship. This was further attempted by Alfred Jakobsen (1970). A renewed bid for the Icelandic origin of *Fagrskinna* was made by its editor, Bjarni Einarsson, in 1985: 'Hafi höfundur Fagrskinnu verið Norðmaður hefur hann verið merkileg undantekning á þrettánda öld' (*Fsk*, cxxxi) [If the author of *Fagrskinna* was a Norwegian he would have been a considerable exception in the thirteenth century]. His lead has been followed by Ármann Jakobsson, who goes so far as to question the view, almost an article of faith, that the author of *Fagrskinna* was an apologist for the Norwegian crown, who was prepared to paint even such universal hate-figures as Eiríkr blóðøx and Jarl Hákon Sigurðarson in comparatively flattering colours in recognition of their descent from Haraldr hárfagri.²⁸ Ármann reads *Fagrskinna* alongside *Heimskringla* and *Morkinskinna* as part of an Icelandic genre sharing essentially the same view of kingship.²⁹

The question is ultimately unimportant in view of the insight provided by these closely related texts, apparently written within a few years of each other, into a lively interchange between the two cultures, as E. O. G. Turville-Petre observes:³⁰

Since the foundation of the archbishopric of Niðaróss in 1152, relations between Iceland and Norway had grown closer. The literature

Hákonssons tid som samlet på skaldedikt, både islandske og norske, enten de nå lagret dem i minnet eller skrev med ned på pergament' [there were certainly many Norwegians in the time of Hákon Hákonarson who collected skaldic poetry, both Icelandic and Norwegian, whether they committed them to memory or wrote them down on vellum].

²⁸ See for example Bjarni Einarsson (*Fsk*, cxxii): 'Fagrskinna er konunghollari en nokkur önnur saga Noregskonunga. Ágrip, Morkinskinna og Heimskringla eru að vísu allir konunghollar, en *Fsk*. ein gerir sér greiniliga far um að breiða yfir ávirðingar konunganna. Leiðarljós þess manns sem setti saman söguna . . . hefur verið aðdáun á ætt Haralds hárfagra, og þess hefur Hákon jarl Sigurðarson einnig notið' [*Fagrskinna* is more sympathetic towards kings than some other sagas of Norwegian kings. *Ágrip*, *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* are certainly all sympathetic towards kings, but only *Fagrskinna* clearly does its best to smooth over the kings' faults. The guiding principle of the man who compiled the history was admiration of the line of Haraldr hárfagri, and this was especially to the benefit of Jarl Hákon Sigurðarson.]

²⁹ Ármann classifies *Sverris saga*, *Skjöldunga saga*, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, *Heimskringla* and *Knytinga saga* as 'Icelandic konungasögur' and argues that they all 'reflect Icelandic ideas of monarchical power, despite the fact that *Fagrskinna* may be of Norwegian origin' (1997, 309).

³⁰ Ólafur Halldórsson (1965) assembles examples of manuscripts in Norway written by Icelanders, and others that were written in Iceland but were rapidly exported to Norway.

of Norway was not so rich as that of Iceland, but for a time the two ran parallel, and they soon began to influence each other. Books written in Iceland were taken to Norway, and those written in Norway were brought to Iceland, where they were copied and sometimes revised, while excerpts from them were included in the works of Icelandic historians. (1953, 169)

FAGRSKINNA AND HEIMSKRINGLA

Snorri Sturluson is thought to have written *Heimskringla*, his great collection of lives of the kings of Norway, in the 1220s or early 1230s, after his return to Iceland from his first visit to Norway in 1220.³¹ *Fagrskinna* is conventionally dated a few years earlier, mainly on the grounds of the belief that Snorri made use of *Fagrskinna* for at least part of his work (see below, pp. 19–20). If Snorri did not know *Fagrskinna* itself he used most of the same sources. The two works have a good deal in common. Both terminate their narrative with the Battle of Ré in 1177, which was probably also the end point of the earlier historical surveys *Ágrip* and *Morkinskinna*, both now incomplete. And both treat the history of the dynasty of Norwegian rulers initiated by Hálfðan svarti, though *Fagrskinna* lacks the legendary prelude that Snorri provides in *Ynglinga saga*. *Fagrskinna* is on a much smaller scale: it covers 308 pages of text in the *Íslenzk fornrit* edition compared with 1155 for *Heimskringla* excluding *Ynglinga saga*. Like Snorri, the author of *Fagrskinna* extensively cites skaldic verses as verification of his narrative, though earlier writers had pioneered this technique. And both authors are noted for their rationalistic and secular approach, excluding the more fantastic materials available to them in both hagiographical and traditional sources or rationalizing their more unlikely elements.

Despite these similarities, *Fagrskinna* has suffered in both scholarly and popular estimation through its proximity to *Heimskringla*. Most of the material found in *Fagrskinna* is also in *Heimskringla*, often, because Snorri used either *Fagrskinna* itself or its sources, in almost the same words. But the more ambitious scope of *Heimskringla* allows for a

³¹ Whaley 1991, 13. Snorri's authorship of *Heimskringla* has been questioned, most recently by Alan Berger (1999), but is convincingly argued for by Ólafur Halldórsson (1979).

more ample contextualization of events, and Snorri's skill with vivid dialogue and characterisation also frequently brings to life a narrative that in *Fagrskinna* may be dull or confused. Overshadowed by Snorri's illustrious example, *Fagrskinna* has often been found wanting even when apparently judged on its own merits. Its latest editor, Bjarni Einarsson, concedes that 'höfundur Fagrskinnu hefur ekki verið rómaður fyrir orðsnilld' (*Fsk*, lxxxi) [the author of *Fagrskinna* has not been praised for skill with words], and Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson judged that it was put together 'í allmiklum flýti' (*Hkr* I, xvii) [in very great haste]. The author of the most detailed consideration of *Fagrskinna*, Gustav Indrebø, conceding these judgements by implication in his attempt to excuse them, argued that what he considered the careful composition of the earlier part of the work gives way towards the end, perhaps because of a haste imposed on the compiler by his patron:

Ein skulde mest tru at den høge herren som boki nok er skrivi for, har teke til aa verta utolug. Han har tykt at det drygde noko lenge fyrr han fekk henne. Det kunde so lett gaa til. Forfattaren av Fgsk. har vore so ovleg samvitsfull med den fyrste og største parten av boki. Og all etterrøkjingi og all den kritiske vegingi har drege arbeidet lenger ut enn fyresetnaden var fraa fyrst av. So har forfattaren lote skunda paa mot slutten av umsyn til sin patronus, og med spraakform, kritikk og ordning av tilfanget har han ikkje faatt take det so nøgje (1917, 222–23).

[It is most likely that the great lord for whom the book was probably written became impatient. He thought that it was taking too long before he received it. That could easily have happened. The author of *Fagrskinna* was so scrupulous about the first and largest part of the book. And all his consideration and critical weighing dragged out the work longer than had been intended at first. So the author had to make haste towards the end with a view to his patron, and with the language, criticism and ordering of material he took less care.]

Fagrskinna is nevertheless an important text, not least for the perspective it gives on our reading of *Heimskringla*, and the light it throws on the general picture of the writing of Norwegian history in the early years of the thirteenth century.

A comparative study of the way in which particular events are treated by *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna* brings home, first of all, how closely Snorri, like other historical writers, depended on the texts he was using as sources, since the two texts are often so similar. To recognize this is not to take away from Snorri's achievement, since

he almost invariably comes off better from the point of view of the dexterity with which he handles the material. At the same time, *Fagrskinna* does preserve some elements, and in particular some skaldic verses, which Snorri either did not know or chose to reject. Whether or not we endorse Snorri's judgement as a historian for excluding them, we can be grateful to *Fagrskinna*, for instance, for the preservation of the poem named in *Snorra Edda* as *Eiríksmál*. It was supposedly commissioned after the death of Eiríkr blóðøx by his queen Gunnhildr, and dramatises Óðinn's welcome of Eiríkr into Valhøll. Also absent from *Heimskringla* is anything corresponding to *Fagrskinna*'s witty narrative of Jarl Hákon Sigurðarson's acquisition of power in Norway by playing off against each other the Danish king Haraldr Gormsson and his nephew Gull-Haraldr (see above, p. 14). Material in *Fagrskinna* which is changed or omitted in *Heimskringla* may give us insight into the different tastes or priorities of the two authors, though it sometimes does no more than testify to Snorri's more assured control of his material. Where we have access to the sources (or later versions of them) used by both historians, in particular *Morkinskinna* and Oddr Snorrason's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, it is clear that *Fagrskinna* does not radically alter its sources, though it frequently omits large sections. So where they differ, *Fagrskinna* often gives an insight into the character of sources which are no longer available, and reveals the changes wrought by Snorri. In what follows some detailed consideration will be given to some of the more interesting divergences between *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*.

It is generally agreed that the similarity between *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* amounts to a direct relationship between these texts. The assumption of earlier critics that *Fagrskinna* was an abbreviation based on *Heimskringla*³² was refuted by Indrebø (1917, 285) who argued that the sparseness of material other than verses in the early part of *Fagrskinna* makes it unlikely that it was based on *Heimskringla*; that the style of *Fagrskinna* in places (notably in the episode of the battle of Stord and in the exchanges of Jarl Hákon with the Danish king and Gull-Haraldr) is more 'folkeleg og djerv' [popular and lively] than Snorri's, and unlikely to be a later re-working; and that, given that the author has more in common in aim and spirit with Snorri

³² Þormóður Torfason ('Torfæus') described *Fagrskinna* as 'breviarium sive epitome chronici Snorrii' (Indrebø 1917, 285). See also Maurer 1867.

than with the author of *Morkinskinna*, he would have used *Heimskringla* as a source for the later part of his work if it had been available to him.

Indrebø (1917) and Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (1937) were both of the opinion that Snorri used *Fagrskinna* in some parts of his work. It is difficult to come to a firm conclusion on the matter since *Fagrskinna*, if not Snorri, tended to follow its sources so closely, and yet many of those sources are not available to us. Many similarities in narrative and wording, therefore, could be explained equally well by use of common sources.

The amount of verse preserved in *Fagrskinna* and not in *Heimskringla* in the narratives of Haraldr hárfagri and Hákon góði suggests that Snorri did not make use of this part of *Fagrskinna*; of those verses common to both, moreover, five are attributed in *Fagrskinna* to Þjóðólfr from Hvinir (vv. 18–22; pp. 49–50 below) and to ‘Hornklofi’ (Þorbjörn hornklofi) in *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* I 115). For the fuller narrative of Hákon góði, *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* probably used a common source, but differences in their narrative style—found as well in the episode of Hákon’s fostering by Aðalsteinn (Athelstan) of England, which is placed temporally correctly in the lifetime of Hákon’s father Haraldr—suggest that they used it independently.

An analysis of this comparatively rare divergence will highlight how Snorri’s methods differed from those of his anonymous fore-runner. This scene stands out all the more in the rather sparse narrative of Haraldr hárfagri in *Fagrskinna*, which seems short of materials other than the long poems it cites. The story of the fostering of Hákon is in fact a story about Haraldr, and is placed accordingly in both *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna*. It dramatises the jockeying for status between the elderly king Haraldr, basking in success and prosperity after his ten-year struggle to unite Norway, and the young Aðalsteinn, ‘the man of highest rank in the Northern lands’. R. I. Page, who has used the episode as evidence that relations between the English and Scandinavians—at least those content to remain in Scandinavia—were more friendly than is commonly accepted, thinks it may be a reminiscence of friendly relations and the exchange of gifts between the apparently rival monarchs; the twelfth-century historian William of Malmesbury describes a richly-decorated ship donated by Haraldr to Athelstan (Page 1981, 115).

In the episode two events are neatly balanced. King Aðalsteinn sends a sword to Haraldr, apparently as a gift; when Haraldr lays

his hand on the hilt, it turns out that by this symbolic gesture he has acknowledged allegiance to Aðalsteinn and become his thane. Haraldr responds with the equally symbolic placing of Hákon, his son by the bondwoman Þóra mostrstong (Morstrstong in *Heimskringla*), on the knee of Aðalsteinn, who is taken thereby to have agreed to foster the boy and accepted a lower status. In *Fagrskinna* the name of the bondwoman is specified; in *Heimskringla* Hákon's birth and parentage have already been established in a separate episode. The two accounts use virtually the same words as the sword is presented; the first divergence comes in the description of Haraldr's reaction. According to *Heimskringla* he recalls, apparently with something of an effort, the virtue of moderation and of allowing his anger to cool before reacting, and it is made explicit that this statesman-like behaviour was habitual with him. In *Fagrskinna* the king receives more cynical treatment. Haraldr remembers that it is not *konungligt*—befitting a king—to kill the messenger, and rather strives to make plot answer plot and word answer word, thus stressing the emphasis on trickery in the episode and the balance between its two parts.

The second part of the anecdote receives more extended treatment in *Fagrskinna*. The hero of the piece is Haukr hábrók, unknown elsewhere except for a clearly fictional *páttr* in *Flateyjarbók*; in this as in *Fagrskinna* Haukr is referred to as the best friend of Haraldr, and plays the role of the king's emissary refusing on the king's behalf to give way to other kings—in this case King Eiríkr of Sweden. In *Heimskringla* the boy is simply placed on Aðalsteinn's knee; *Fagrskinna* preserves the theme of gift-giving initiated with the gift of the sword. In an exchange of direct speech curtailed in *Heimskringla*, Haukr announces that his gift is a white bird, well tamed, and instructs the king to tame it all the better in future. When he produces the child from under his cloak and places him on the king's knee, explaining that Haraldr demands that he foster a bondwoman's child, Aðalsteinn remarks that the boy does not have the eyes of a slave. The motif of sharp eyes, especially of a child, betraying noble origins is a common literary device; the image of Hákon as a white bird can be seen as working in the same way. Trained hawks and falcons, which could be white, were valuable exports from Scandinavia and were in fact presented to European kings (Gelsinger 1981, 252 n. 10). The comparison of a king or a warrior with a hawk, particularly with reference to their sharp eyes, is also common currency in skaldic verse, and in later life Hákon himself is referred to in *Ágrip* as *hawk-*

ligr 'hawk-like' as he goes into his last battle (*Ágr* 10). The reference to the sword under Haukr's cloak, and the number of his equally well-armed supporters, is tellingly placed at this moment of greatest peril; *Heimskringla* less suspensefully details it before their entrance into the hall, and Haukr's fearlessness—*hneig honum ekki*—is emphasised. Snorri's lighter touch is betrayed in his compression of the subsequent conversation. The implications of fostering for social status are pointed out only in an explanatory aside, rather than laboriously explained to the king in Haukr's speech; and it is only in Haukr's last words that he implies, rather than spelling out, that the boy is in fact Haraldr's son. In *Fagrskinna* Haukr's departure implies a dashing display of weapons to win his escape from the king's wrath. Both versions of the story end anti-climactically with the assurance that despite competitive gestures the status of each king within his own realm was unaffected, leaving in the air the rather threatening implication found in Haukr's last words in both, that by killing this apparently helpless offspring of Haraldr, Aðalsteinn would not be rid of all of Haraldr's sons. This would seem to be no empty threat, as the sources agree that there were about twenty of them, though there is some difference of opinion as to their names.

The liveliness of the narrative in *Fagrskinna* is somewhat smoothed over in Snorri's more compact version. Whether the source was an extended saga of Haraldr or of Hákon, or a more incidental *páttr*, as its scope and subject might seem to suggest, Snorri evidently recognised its fictitious elements and chose to exclude them. The more relaxed policy of the author of *Fagrskinna*, who moreover seems to have been particularly short of narrative material in this part of his text, allows him to retain them.

Indrebø's theory that Snorri did not use *Fagrskinna* for the earlier part of *Heimskringla*, but used it as a supplementary source as the work progressed, has not been seriously challenged, though the evidence is suggestive rather than conclusive. For the reign of Haraldr gráfeldr it has been suggested that Snorri used *Fagrskinna* among other sources (Indrebø 1917, 289–292), though the evidence, which consists of similarities in wording, is quite slight. For the saga of Óláfr Tryggvason, the close dependence of both sources on Oddr Snorrason's saga of Óláfr Tryggvason makes it possible to deduce that Snorri was following *Fagrskinna* in certain divergences from Oddr's account (Indrebø 1917, 292–94; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson in *Hkr* I cxxx–cxxxii). For example, all sources agree that Óláfr fought with

only eleven ships in the battle of Svǫldr; but *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna* agree in citing a divergent verse by Halldórr ókristni which declares that Óláfr had 71 ships when he left Wendland, and their strategies for reconciling these contradictory figures are essentially the same. Halldórr's verse is not cited in the version of Oddr's account closest to that followed by *Fagrskinna* (Stock. perg. 4to no. 18), though it is found in another version (AM 310, 4to).³³

The long preamble to the Battle of Svǫldr in 999/1000, in which Óláfr was killed by a coalition of Swedes, Danes and Norwegians under Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson, demonstrates the close, though selective, dependence of *Fagrskinna* on its sources. The corresponding version in *Heimskringla* reduces and tightens the narrative. It has been noted that the author of *Fagrskinna* has a relish for battles (p. 10 above), and it is notable that he transmits Oddr's version of the climactic event almost verbatim, although this is severely out of proportion with the short shrift he gives to the earlier events of Óláfr's life, in particular his role, primary in Oddr's hagiographical text, in converting Norway and most of the rest of the Nordic lands. Even given the desire to omit hagiographical material, though, it has to be said that *Fagrskinna* does not prepare the ground well for the climactic scene it reproduces in such detail: events leading up to the battle are left somewhat vague, and the effectiveness of the scene is lessened by the fact that two of the ships of Óláfr Tryggvason which are involved in the drama, the *Ormr inn skammi* and the *Trana*, have not been introduced to the narrative earlier.

Oddr's extended, tension-building account, in which Óláfr's opponents prematurely identify one ship after another as his famous ship *Ormr inn langi* [the Long Serpent], is an obvious literary device, and has been traced to an account of the approach of Charlemagne's army against the Langobards in the ninth-century *De Gestis Karoli Magni* of the Monk of St Gall (Jones 1984, 138). In Oddr's account, no fewer than seven ships are seen, each so impressive in appearance that either the Danes or the Swedes or both identify it as Óláfr's splendid ship, only to be put right by Jarl Eiríkr. *Fagrskinna* reproduces Oddr's version very closely, though with a degree of compression; the second and third ships mentioned by Oddr have been

³³ Morgenstern (1890, 29–32) and Indrebø (1917, 91–93) argued that this version was influenced by *Fagrskinna* in this and other instances. The view has qualified support from Finnur Jónsson in Oddr, xxiii–xxiv.

conflated, perhaps by accident. Snorri's version is drastically reduced, so that only four false alarms precede the appearance of Óláfr, and yet he preserves most of the witty retorts and canny awareness of the enemy's true strength that marks out Jarl Eiríkr as a subsidiary hero of the scene. Both Snorri and Oddr refer to the brightness of the weather, which *Fagrskinna* omits. In Oddr this is seen to have a particular motivation when *Ormr inn langi* finally appears, almost too brightly gilded by the sun for the human gaze, and an explicit parallel is drawn between its superiority to other ships and the king's superiority to other kings, improbably put in the mouth of his prime enemy, Jarl Eiríkr. In Snorri's version the bright weather has a general appropriateness to the visual quality of the scene, but his confirmation that the last ship to come into view is indeed *Ormr inn langi* is almost anticlimactic. In both *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna* the building of the ship has been described separately elsewhere in the text, and they do not attempt to match Oddr's spectacular description. Once again, it seems, Snorri shows himself resistant to the more glaringly literary qualities of his text, reducing the elaborate repetitiveness of this scene and shearing off its powerful visual climax. *Fagrskinna* gives it full value, though the climactic praise of Óláfr is replaced by a stirring call to arms by Jarl Eiríkr; this seems aptly to represent the author's taste for violent confrontation.

There is little or no sign of influence from *Fagrskinna* on *Óláfs saga helga* in *Heimskringla*. This is unsurprising in view of the fact that the saga in *Heimskringla* is an adaptation of Snorri's earlier *Separate Saga of St Óláfr*, and is therefore to be grouped alongside the earliest parts of *Heimskringla*, written before Snorri came into contact with *Fagrskinna*.

In subsequent parts of *Heimskringla* Snorri, like the author of *Fagrskinna*, followed the ample text of *Morkinskinna* quite closely. But *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna* have a number of additions and corrections in common, suggesting that Snorri made subsidiary use of *Fagrskinna* (Indrebø 1917, 294–97). For example, *Morkinskinna* refers to *Ótta . . . hertogi einr rikur suðr j Saxlande* (*Mork* 38) [Otto, a powerful duke south in Saxony],³⁴ whom *Fagrskinna* (mistakenly) calls *hertogi í Brúnsvík* (*Fsk* 179–80) [duke of Brunswick]; in *Heimskringla* he appears as *hertogi af Saxlandi ór Brúnsvík* (*Hkr* III 41) [duke of Saxland,

³⁴ As also *Ágrip* (*Ágr* 26). The Otto referred to is Ordulf (d. 1072), son of duke Bernhard of Saxony.

from Brunswick]. Here and elsewhere Snorri attempts to reconcile divergences between *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna*. *Fagrskinna* corrects the statement in *Morkinskinna* that twelve months elapsed between the Battle of Stamford Bridge and the Battle of Hastings; the correct interval, 19 days, is also specified in *Heimskringla*.

A substantial addition made by *Fagrskinna* to *Morkinskinna*, more briefly recorded in *Heimskringla*, is the account of the adventures and death of the English earl Waltheof (jarl Valþjófr) after the Battle of Hastings. Waltheof, erroneously referred to in all Norse texts as one of the sons of Earl Godwine, but in fact the son of Earl Siward digri of Northumbria (Scott 1953–57, 78), is said in *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* to have fought against Haraldr harðráði at Fulford Gate, the battle, successful for Haraldr, which took place immediately before the Battle of Stamford Bridge. Snorri quotes a verse referring to the Northumbrians as *Valþjófs lið* (*Hkr.* III 54) [Valþjófr's troops] which must be the source for the mention of Waltheof at this battle; it is not attested in English sources.³⁵ Even less certain is his participation at Hastings. English sources are not specific, but the fact that he was pardoned by William the Conqueror and evidently lived to take part in two later rebellions against him perhaps suggests that he had not fought against William at Hastings. According to both *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*, he escaped by flight, and immediately afterwards—the same night according to *Fagrskinna*—encountered more than a hundred Normans and set fire to them in an oak wood. Snorri cites in support of this a verse which he attributes to the *Valþjófsflokk* of Þorkell Skallason (*Hkr.* III 195), a poet apparently known also to the author of *Fagrskinna*, since he cites a half-verse in the following chapter, and identifies his father as Þórðr skalli. His identification of Þorkell as *hirðmaðr Valþjófs jarls* [a retainer of jarl Valþjófr] may have been deduced from the second half of the second verse quoted by Snorri, where the earl is referred to as *harri minn* [my lord], an intriguing glimpse of an English earl of Danish descent in 1066, employing his own skaldic poet. The verse quoted by Snorri is presumably the source for the figure of one hundred Normans mentioned in both accounts, but they must have had some other account (or more of Þorkell's poem) as authority for the story

³⁵ But Andersson and Gade (*Morkinskinna* 2000, 445) are too definite in asserting that he was not there.

of the fire in the oak wood. It has been suggested (Scott 1953–57, 90) that the events referred to have some relation to an uprising in York in 1069, in which English sources name Waltheof as a participant; but it is difficult to fit the mention of fire in the verse to the English accounts of the Normans themselves setting fire to the town to pre-empt the rebel attack, nor is the ambush in the oak wood accounted for.

Fagrskinna adds a detailed account, unknown elsewhere in Norse sources and with few points of contact in the English ones, of the betrayal of Waltheof by William and his execution by the Normans—which qualifies as a martyrdom given the author’s comment: ‘and many men were cured by his blood, and Earl Waltheof is a true saint’ (p. 235). Snorri is more cautious, saying merely that *kalla enskir menn hann helgan* (*Hkr* III, 196) [the English consider him a saint]. The cheating of Waltheof by William is vouched for by the half-verse cited in both accounts, and both texts describe the killing of Waltheof as a kind of ambush, but although Snorri gives the otherwise unknown place name *Kastalabryggja*, he eliminates the more dramatic details in *Fagrskinna* of Valþjófr forgiving his executioners, giving his silk gown to the ringleader, and lying down with his arms outstretched in the shape of a cross to await the executioner’s blow.

These details do not chime well with anything known from English sources. Waltheof seems to have been a focus of popular resistance to William; but his execution took place in 1075 in Winchester after a judicial trial. Although the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* merely reports that he was beheaded, a hagiographic gloss was soon cast on his death by subsequent historians, associated with the abbey of Crowland where he was buried. Orderic Vitalis has a long account of his execution in which Waltheof persuades his killers to postpone the deed until he has finished reciting the Lord’s prayer.

It is clear that popular legends about Waltheof were circulating both in English and in Norse sources from soon after his death. There may be some value in the skaldic verses that Snorri and *Fagrskinna* take to be eyewitness accounts, but some of the information in the texts is not vouched for by the verse, and it does not prevent them from telescoping the events of ten years into the immediate aftermath of Hastings. As for the reason why the secular-minded author of *Fagrskinna* was tempted to include the story of this peripheral martyr, the answer seems to lie in the false genealogy that made

him believe that Waltheof belonged to the family of (the Scandinavian) Earl Godwine.

The passages discussed here give some idea of how *Fagrskinna*, despite its brevity overall, includes materials excluded by Snorri in his more rational and controlled editing of his material. At the same time they are a reminder of how much Snorri owes to earlier texts. That the author of *Fagrskinna* did not strive for originality is clear from such passages as the prelude to the battle of Svǫldr; it is probably true that elsewhere as well he tended to select and edit rather than invent or even re-work. At the same time he was attempting something new in the breadth and range of his survey. We may be grateful for the faithfulness with which the author seems to have approached his sources, since so many of them no longer exist, even if his control and penetration as a historian is somewhat eclipsed by those of his brilliant contemporary Snorri.

VERSE IN *FAGRSKINNA*

271 skaldic verses or part-verses are quoted in *Fagrskinna*. If *Fagrskinna* predates Snorri, it can claim to represent the first appearance in surviving texts of a considerable part of the skaldic corpus. Virtually all we have of one poem—*Eiríksmál*, the memorial *drápa* commemorating Eiríkr blóððox—only appears here (apart from 10 lines also preserved in *Snorra Edda*), as does a large part (14 whole or part-verses) of the *Haraldskvæði* or *Hrafnsmál* of Þorbjörn hornklofi, in which a valkyrie and a raven discuss the merits of Haraldr hárfagri, and a number of other whole or part-verses:

- v. 26 A half-verse attributed to Gunnhildr konungamóðir
- vv. 40, 41 A 'playful rhyme' (*gamankviðling*) by Eyvindr skáldaspillir, answered by a paired half-verse spoken by Hákon inn góði
- vv. 66, 69 One full verse and one half-verse of the *Gráfeldardrápa* of Glúmr Geirason
- vv. 70, 72, 74, 75, 76 Two full verses and three half-verses by Einarr skálaglamm, believed to belong to *Vellekla*
- v. 73 One verse from an otherwise unknown *drápa*, perhaps in honour of Jarl Hákon, by Einarr skálaglamm
- v. 86 One half-verse by Eyvindr skáldaspillir, believed to belong to *Háleygjatal*

- v. 96 One half-verse by Þórðr Kolbeinsson, believed to belong to the *Belgskakadrápa* in honour of Jarl Eiríkr
- v. 120 One verse from the memorial *Óláfsdrápa* by Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld (Lines 7–8, including the *stef* [refrain] of this poem, are also in *Hallfreðar saga* and Oddr's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*.)
- vv. 130, 134, 135 The first verse of Sighvatr's *Nesjavísur*, and two half-verses attributed to Sighvatr believed to belong to this poem
- v. 162 One verse by Sighvatr believed to belong to his *Knútsdrápa*
- vv. 210, 211 Two verses from Þorleikr inn fagri's *flokkur* on Sveinn Úlfsson
- vv. 221, 227 A half-verse by Þjóðólfr (of which two lines only are also in *Morkinskinna*), and a full verse (of which one line is cited in *Morkinskinna*) believed to belong to his *Sexstefja*
- v. 264 A half-verse attributed to Halldórr skvaldri and believed to belong to his *Haraldsdrápa*

In addition the author sometimes refers to poems by name without citing them, and at times his narrative draws upon skaldic verses not cited in the text although they are known elsewhere. Sometimes when a verse is cited that also appears in *Heimskringla* or elsewhere, the order of the half-verses is reversed, which suggests that where the author and Snorri had access to the same corpus of verse, they knew it in a disjointed form, or at least they had independent views of how the same verses should be pieced together.

Fagrskinna does not articulate, as Snorri does in his Prologue to *Heimskringla*, the principles on which skaldic verse is to be selected and cited:³⁶

Með Haraldi konungi váru skáld, ok kunna menn enn kvæði þeira ok allra konunga kvæði, þeira er síðan hafa verit í Nóregi, ok tókum vér þar mest dæmi af, þat er sagt í þeim kvæðum, er kveðin váru fyrir sjálfum höfðingjunum eða sonum þeira. Tókum vér þat allt fyrir satt, er í þeim kvæðum finnsk um ferðir þeira eða orrostur. En þat er háttir skálda at lofa þann mest, er þá eru þeir fyrir, en engi myndi þat þora at segja sjálfum honum þau verk hans, er allir þeir, er heyrði, vissi,

³⁶ Two versions exist of a Prologue to Snorri's *Separate saga of St Óláfr*, thought to be a revision of that to *Heimskringla* (Whaley 1991, 55–57; Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 379–83). The longer version includes a more detailed discussion of the historical value of skaldic verse (*Sép. Saga*, I 1–5).

at hégomi væri ok skrqk, ok svá sjálfr hann. Þat væri þá háð, en eigi lof . . . En kvæðin þykkja mér sízt ór stað færð, ef þau eru rétt kvæðin ok skynsamliga upp tekin. (*Hkr* I 5, 7)

[With King Haraldr [hárfagri] there were skalds, and men still remember their poems and the poems about all the kings who have ruled since his time in Norway, and we have taken most note of what is said in those poems which were recited before the rulers themselves or their sons. We regard as true all that which is found in those poems about their expeditions and battles. It is the habit of poets to give highest praise to the one in whose presence they are at the time, but no one would dare to tell him to his face about deeds of his which all who listened, as well as the prince himself, knew were falsehoods and fabrications. That would be mockery and not praise . . . As to the poems I consider them to be least corrupted if they are correctly composed and judiciously interpreted.]

And Snorri does give priority to verses claiming to be composed by eye-witnesses. But although this technique may have been first articulated by Snorri, it is also apparent in *Fagrskinna* and can occasionally be deduced from the author's remarks, as when he says of Sighvatr's verses about the Battle of Nesjar: 'Here it is mentioned that these events had only just happened when the poem was composed, and one who took part in the battle composed it himself' (p. 141). The remark is placed a little inconsequentially after one and a half of the six full and two half-verses cited from this poem have already appeared; the name of the poet and the poem have also already been specified. Snorri's version of the same scholarly attribution is more methodical and circumstantial: 'Sigvatr skáld var þar í orrostu. Hann orti þegar um sumarit eptir orrostu flokk þann, er Nesjavísur eru kallaðar, ok segir þar vandliga frá þessum tíðendum' (*Hkr* II 61) [The poet Sighvatr was present at the battle. During the summer immediately following he composed the sequence of verses which is called the *Nesjavísur*, and there he tells carefully of these events.]

In fact the principle of the veracity of contemporaneous verse is already well-established in *Morkinskinna*, though somewhat masked by the more discursive method and taste of its author. In the context of justifying the omission of unattested tales about King Haraldr harðráði, *Morkinskinna* makes a distinction between these and the trustworthiness of the poems composed during his lifetime: 'Er mikil saga fra Haralldi konunge j kuædi sett þau er honum samtida uoru vm hann kuodin og færdu honum sialfum þeir sem ortu' (*Mork* 170)

[A great narrative of King Haraldr is recorded in the poems composed during his lifetime, and they were recited to him by those who composed them] (*Morkinskinna* 2000, 204). This remark is interestingly adapted in *Fagrskinna* to apply specifically to Icelandic poets: ‘There is a long history of Haraldr recorded in those poems that Icelanders delivered to him in person’ (p. 208). *Fagrskinna* takes over from *Morkinskinna* the use of a verse by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson as evidence that the Norwegians referred to Sveinn Úlfsson as a jarl rather than a king: ‘This shows it to be true that King Magnús and his men called Sveinn “jarl”, though he himself called himself “king”, as did his friends’ (p. 179; see *Mork* 51). Snorri cites the same verse without comment. In the same manner both *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* use a verse to sanction a description of the etiquette of the seating plan at drinking sessions before innovations were introduced by King Óláfr kyrri: ‘To show that this is no lie, Arnórr jarlaskáld tells how he sat with Jarl Þorfinnr’ (p. 240). Here the context is more precise in *Fagrskinna* than in *Morkinskinna*, which does not mention Jarl Þorfinnr (of Orkney), and therefore allows the assumption that the verse actually refers to the court of King Óláfr (*Mork* 289–90). *Heimskringla* omits this verse, perhaps on a principle of the exclusion of generality that may also explain Snorri’s omission of many of the verses of the *Haraldskvæði* cited in *Fagrskinna*, detailing the way of life at the court of King Haraldr hárfagri.

The use of verses for historical verification, then, was a technique articulated but not invented by Snorri. He was generally more rigorous in what he chose to exclude than was the author of *Fagrskinna*, but their criteria were essentially the same. In their work on *Morkinskinna*, Andersson and Gade take the opportunity of comparing the three compilations where they run parallel—having largely rejected the theory that the extant version of *Morkinskinna* is heavily interpolated (see above, p. 12)—in order to investigate the basis on which *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* chose to retain or reject verses found in their source, and conclude:

The comparison of the use of poetry in MskMS [the extant version of *Morkinskinna*], *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna* has revealed that the compilers of the latter two compendia were consciously selective in their use of the poetic corpus of ÆMsk [the oldest *Morkinskinna*], and that they included only stanzas that provided concrete information with a direct bearing on the events narrated in the prose. In both compilations, then, skaldic stanzas were used as historical verification. ÆMsk, however, is a completely different matter. The author certainly drew

on skaldic stanzas for historical information, especially in the ‘Saga of Haraldr and Magnus’, and it is obvious that skaldic poetry was an art with which he was thoroughly familiar. (*Morkinskinna* 2000, 56–57)

They go on to make the case that the author of *Morkinskinna* gave an aesthetic weight to the verses and their structural role which, by implication, was not a concern of the sterner historians of *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*, and which, they suggest, may account for the ‘relatively low esteem in which the *Morkinskinna* compilation appears to have been held by later historians’, who of course used *Heimskringla* almost exclusively as the basis for their expansion and reworking of the kings’ sagas:

He was not recording history but telling a story in which skaldic stanzas were supposed to be an integral part (57).

As an indication of the degree of selection made by *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*, Andersson and Gade specify that in the ‘saga of Haraldr and Magnús’, the longest section of *Morkinskinna*, 156 verses are included. Leaving aside 22 which are included in *þettir* and other anecdotal material, 134 remain, of which 80 are reproduced in *Heimskringla* and 74 in *Fagrskinna*. *Heimskringla* includes 16 verses not found in *Fagrskinna* and *Fagrskinna* cites 10 that Snorri does not include. The analysis reveals that verses excluded by *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna* are generally lacking in specific information, such as place or personal names and chronological detail; and they may be part of a sequence of two or three verses used to punctuate retrospectively the narrative of a particular battle. Given these conditions it will come as no surprise to readers familiar with the conventions of skaldic verse that these excluded verses reflect ‘a delight in battle descriptions involving beasts of battle feasting on corpses’, though Andersson and Gade characterise this as ‘the taste of one specific individual’ (26).

Both Snorri and the author of *Fagrskinna* also tended to exclude verses in simpler metres such as *fornyrðislag*, and in Snorri’s case to substitute for these verses in the more rigid and incorruptible *dróttkvætt* metre. A more rigorous policy in this respect may help to explain Snorri’s exclusion or conservative use of the early poems which *Fagrskinna* gives more or less in full.³⁷

³⁷ *Haraldskvæði*, *Háleygjatal*, *Eiríksmál* and *Hákonarmál*, all cited in the first 13 chapters of *Fagrskinna*, use eddic metres rather than the more complex *dróttkvætt*.

In his study of *Fagrskinna*, Gustav Indrebø (1917, 241) introduced only to reject the notion that this author too was interested in skaldic poetry for its own sake:

Ofte nok har dei peika paa kor stor interesse Fgsk. har for vers. Ein kunde ved fyrste augnekastet vera freista til aa tru at forfattaren har vore so glad i kvædi at han har sett inn ein heil slump vers berre for moro skuld, teke med visor some ikkje trongst til aa prova den saga han fortalde . . . Det er rett aa tala um forfattaren sin kjærleik til skaldediktingi; han har til og med drive litterært samanliknande studium. Cfr. den raamande domen um likskapen millom Eiriksmaal og Øyvinds Haakonarmaal. Men det vilde likevel vera eit mistak aa tru at han i større mun har teke upp kvæde av andre enn reint historiske grunnar—av æstetiske.

[It has often been observed what a great interest *Fagrskinna* has in verse. At first glance one might be tempted to believe that the author enjoyed verse so much that he has put in whole series of verses purely for the sake of entertainment, including verses which are not necessary as evidence for the story he was telling . . . It is accurate to ascribe to the author a fondness for poetry; he has moreover an urge for comparative literary study, as when he points out the similarity between the *Eiríksmál* and Eyvindr skáldaspillir's *Hákonarmál*. But it would probably be a mistake to believe that on the whole he selected stanzas on other than purely historical grounds—on aesthetic ones.]

Andersson and Gade's distinction between, on the one hand, the historical priorities shared by *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*, and the aesthetic use of verses as an integral structural feature of the narrative in *Morkinskinna*, is borne out by the inconsistent way in which verse is deployed in *Fagrskinna* as a whole. In the first part of the narrative, covering the histories of Haraldr hárfagri and his sons, where the source materials were apparently few, he cites long extracts from skaldic poems—some, as remarked earlier, unknown elsewhere—thinly held together with prose introductions. The importance of the battle of Hafsfjörðr is acknowledged by the inclusion of seven verses from Þorbjörn hornklofi's *Haraldskvæði*, though the author attributes five of these to Þjóðólfr from Hvinir. Indrebø remarks on the author's inability or reluctance to recast in prose the information provided in the verses that he cites, to justify his view that the author, here and elsewhere in this early part of the text, lacked the ability to distil information from the verses he cites and recast it in prose form, that he lacks the imagination that Snorri used so abundantly to draw out information from verses. He adds the speculation that this is

partly a result of his inexperience at the beginning of the work: ‘det er fyrste gongen han brukar skaldekvæde, so han er ikkje komen rett i øving med aa draga prosaforteljing ut av dei’ (pp. 130–31) [this (the battle of Hafrsfjorðr) is the first time he uses skaldic verses, so he is not fully practised at drawing out prose narrative from them]. More generously, he adds that throughout the work the author shows a preference for using few words, and that he frequently allows information given in the verses to speak for itself without repeating it in prose.

The suggestion that the author of *Fagrskinna* was a novice whose ability to derive prose narrative from his verse sources gained strength as he proceeded further into the work suggests an experimental process which the text otherwise does little to substantiate, and which is not supported by the apparently well-established practice of using verse sources illustrated in the earlier *Morkinskinna*. It is more accurate to deduce that the author’s strength lay in the critical rearrangement of earlier sources, and that, unlike Snorri, he had few resources when it came to constructing a narrative out of little but pre-existing poems. And it may be also that the sneaking fondness for skaldic poems remarked on by Indrebø gave him a preference for keeping them whole, if that is how he had received them. For comparison we may note how Snorri, with more artistic self-consciousness, makes a stylistic feature out of quoting the *Hákonarmál*, the *efidrápa* for Hákon inn góði, in its entirety by way of rounding off the saga of that king, although individual verses dealing with his last battle had already been used in their chronological place (*Hkr* I 193–97).³⁸

The other major unevenness in the citation of verse in *Fagrskinna* is that in the latter part of the text, after the beginning of the narrative of the reign of King Magnús berfœttr, *Fagrskinna* ceases to incorporate verses into the prose narrative, and the presence of such verses in the exemplar from which *Fagrskinna* derives can only be established by information incorporated into the prose. For this substantial part of the work the source is still *Morkinskinna*, although the last part of that text is now lost. It is not clear why the citation of verses was abandoned in *Fagrskinna*, unless it was that the author simply began to feel the need for brevity as he came towards the

³⁸ The introduction of the poem with ‘Þat eru kǫlluð Hákonarmál, ok er þetta upphaf’ [Those (verses) are called *Hákonarmál*, and this is the beginning], however, suggests that the original intention was to cite only a sample verse or two.

end of his narrative. Indrebø surmises that he felt less need to add the testimony of verses as he approached his own lifetime. Probably, as is usual in *Fagrskinna*, the answer lies partly in the varied nature of the author's sources, which he took little trouble to alter on stylistic grounds alone. It is possible, for example, that the **Hryggjarstykki* of Eiríkr Oddsson was an exclusively prose work, though it seems to have drawn material from skaldic verses. Andersson and Gade show how progressively more verses from the *Sigurðarbálkr* of Ívarr Ingimundarson were incorporated, sometimes awkwardly, into this material in the later versions of *Morkinskinna*. The author of *Fagrskinna* is so unconcerned to impose stylistic consistency on his material that he not only ignores this possibility but also omits most of the remaining verses that would have been in this part of *Morkinskinna*, even where he is using material that is derived from the verses.

The author of *Fagrskinna* was clearly experienced in the reading of skaldic verses and interprets them critically. His generally sceptical attitude to his material (coupled with his tendency to compress) serves him well, for example, in his use of Sighvatr Þórðarson's *Vikingarvísur*, which are the ultimate source for the early Viking exploits of King Óláfr Haraldsson. *Heimskringla* includes fifteen verses from this poem, of which *Fagrskinna* cites only one full verse and two half-verses. But the verses clearly lie behind the *Fagrskinna* prose. Where *Fagrskinna* paraphrases, reliably if at times unhelpfully, Snorri's concern is to interpret, sometimes to the point of over-interpretation. The first of these verses, cited only by Snorri, refers to a battle *fyr austan . . . við sker Sóta* [in the east off Sóti's rock] (*Hkr* II 6–7). Where Snorri, following earlier sources (since the *Legendary saga* has the same story) gives a long account of a viking called Sóti against whom Óláfr supposedly fought, *Fagrskinna* confines itself to the statement 'Óláfr fought for the first time in the east off Sótaker' (p. 133). On the other hand, it is only Snorri's citation of the verse that confirms the likelihood that Sóti is an invention inspired by the unidentified place name. *Fagrskinna* offers as paraphrase of the second verse, again without citation, a bare reference to a victorious fight in Eysýsla in the Baltic. Snorri's version elaborates a reference in the poem to treachery—*né svik fólusk*—into an account for which there is no other support, of the inhabitants promising, and then failing, to bring tribute to Óláfr. But the author of *Fagrskinna* is also prone to over-interpretation where it suits his agenda. Throughout the sequence

of *Víkingarvísur* recounting Óláfr's campaigns in England it is unclear on which side Óláfr is fighting; *Fagrskinna* almost obsessively repeats that he is fighting against the Danes, though in one verse, cited in full in *Heimskringla*, his opposition to the English is stated clearly:

Vann ungr konungr Englum
ótrauðr skarar rauðar (*Hkr* II 21).

[the young king reddened the hair of the English, without reluctance.]

Fagrskinna cites only the second half of the verse, with the introduction: 'His ninth battle he fought off Nýjamóða and Sighvatr says that he fought against the Danes'. The first half of the verse, with its reference to the English, is omitted; the part that is cited includes the words *herr fell danskr* [the Danish army fell], but it is unclear from the verse whether the Danes are for or against Óláfr. And the issue is confused in the previous verse where a reference to Óláfr as *Vindum hátt* [dangerous to Wends] prompts *Fagrskinna* (and the *Legendary saga*) to say that he was fighting 'against Danes and Wends', an error which Snorri avoids.

MANUSCRIPTS AND EDITIONS

The name *Fagrskinna* 'fair parchment' was first applied in the seventeenth century to one of two medieval manuscript books then existing in the University Library of Copenhagen, in which were recorded histories of the Norwegian kings. The Icelandic professor and manuscript collector Árni Magnússon wrote on a slip of paper placed in the paper manuscript book now catalogued as AM 303 4to (*Fsk* lxi):

Petta er kópía af kálfskinnsbók sem Þormóður Torfason í scriptis sínum kallar Fagrskinnu seu Compendium chronicorum. Kálfskinnsbókin heyrir til Bibliothecæ Academicæ Hafniensi. Ejusdem generis liber annar er og in Bibliotheca Universitatis sub titulo Noregs konunga tal. Væri ómáks vert að conferera þessa báða til samans og gjöra úr þeim eina edition, því báðir þessir codices eru eitt slags þótt víða differere, og annar sé fyllri en annar.

[This is a copy of a vellum book which Þormóður Torfason in his writings calls *Fagrskinna*, a summary of chronicles. The vellum book belongs to the Library of the University of Copenhagen. Another book of the same kind is also in the University library under the title 'Catalogue of the kings of Norway'. It would be worth the trouble to

compare the two together and make one edition from them, for both these books are of the same kind though they differ widely, and one is longer than the other.]

There is no longer any opportunity to judge the beauty of the book called *Fagrskinna*, since both it and the similar codex referred to here were destroyed in the fire in the library in 1728. (The name was given apparently to distinguish it from the book called *Morkinskinna* ‘rotten parchment’, a name also coined by Þormóður Torfason, known as Thormodus Torfæus.) Fortunately a number of copies of both versions had been made in the late seventeenth century. The longer version referred to by Árne, apparently that to which the name *Fagrskinna* was attached, exists in the following copies, all made by Ásgeir Jónsson, a scribe employed by Þormóður Torfason 1688–1705:

AM 52 fol.
AM 301 4to
AM 303 4to

This version, now referred to as A, was probably written in the first half of the fourteenth century in south-eastern Norway (Jakobsen 1971).

The other version, known as B, has been dated to the middle of the thirteenth century, and a single vellum leaf, which had been removed from the book before it was taken to Copenhagen, survives in Oslo (NRA 51). The palaeographical evidence of this fragment suggests that the book was written in or near Trondheim. The suggestion has also been made, based on its interpolation of the genealogy of the Arnsmœðlingar (descendants of Árnsmóðr), that the B version was made for a noble family in Sunnmøre (Hagland 1980, 132, 153). Surviving copies of B are:

UB 371 fol. (copied by Ásgeir Jónsson)
AM 51 fol. (copied by Eyjólfur Björnsson 1666–1746)
AM 302 4to (copied by Eyjólfur Björnsson).

The so-called B version, though older, has several lacunae, some of several pages, others omissions of single words. The first printed edition, that of P. A. Munch and C. Unger, published in Christiania (Oslo) in 1847, was based on A. Subsequent editions, that of Finnur Jónsson in 1902–03 and that of Bjarni Einarsson in 1984, follow B

in the primary copy UB 371 fol., filling the lacunae from the A text.

As noted above, Árni Magnússon observed that the second of the two vellum volumes, the B version, bore the name *Noregs konunga tal* [Catalogue of the kings of Norway], a reference to the heading found at the beginning of the existing text: *Her hæfr upp Noregs konunga tal oc fyrst vm Hálfðan svarta* (Fagrskinna 1902–03, 3) [Here begins the Catalogue of the kings of Norway, and (it tells) first about Hálfðan svarti]. The A version has the same preamble, with the words *Noregs konunga tal* replaced by *ettartal noreghs kononga* [family catalogue of the kings of Norway].

THE TRANSLATION

The present translation is based on the *Íslenzk fornrit* edition of Bjarni Einarsson (Reykjavík 1985). Page references to this edition are provided in [] in the text. No systematic editorial apparatus is supplied in this translation; the assumption is that readers particularly interested in the Icelandic text will refer to this edition and, for more detailed textual information, to that of Finnur Jónsson (1902–03). However, the footnotes register where the translation follows an emendation of the B-text (normally but not always agreeing with the editorial decisions made by Bjarni Einarsson) and where substantial lacunae occur in the B-text, whether these have been filled from the A-text or whether reconstruction is impossible. Smaller lacunae (of a few words) filled from the A-text have not been signalled. In a few cases misprints or other mistakes in the *Íslenzk fornrit* text have been noted.

Some words, many of them recurring frequently throughout the text, are either untranslatable or require some explanation in their translated form. These appear in italics in the text and the reader is referred to the glossary.

It is almost impossible to arrive at an elegant, transparent and consistent policy for rendering place names. In order to supply as much information about the text as possible, place names have usually been left in the original language. Most names are rendered in the nominative Old Norse form on their first appearance, with the modern English or Scandinavian equivalent following in parentheses. On subsequent appearances the name is rendered only in Old Norse if it is a Scandinavian form, but names that are Scandinavianisations

of non-Norse names in the text have normally been rendered in English after the first appearance (e.g. Sicily for Sikiley; but Miklagarðr is retained for Constantinople). English names for kingdoms (Norway, Denmark) have been used. An index of place names gives these equivalents and where necessary identifies the locations. Names appear on the maps in Old Norse form.

As with place names, personal names are usually given in the Old Norse nominative form on first appearance, with the English equivalent, if any, in brackets; subsequently only the Old Norse form is used, even where the name is a Scandinavianisation (e.g. Vilhjálmr, Aðalsteinn, Valþjófr). Nicknames are translated where possible, but the translation is only given at the first appearance of the name.

The citation of skaldic verse is obviously at the heart of *Fagrskinna*. To reflect the effect of this in the text, many of the metrical constraints of this complex verse form have been preserved in translating them. The metre used in most verses, *dróttkvætt* or 'court metre', is extremely intricate, requiring a normally six-syllable line, with three syllables alliterating in each pair of lines; each line must also have either half-rhyme (in odd-numbered lines) or full rhyme (in even-numbered lines) between two syllables, and each line must end in a trochee. These requirements, other than that of rhyme, have usually been met in this translation, though lines have often stretched well beyond the ideal six syllables. While bearing all these desiderata in mind, I have endeavoured to translate literally the actual information in the verse, as well as the distinctive poetic kennings, and to retain the syntax in so far as this is possible in the transfer from an inflected to an uninflected language. If the result is sometimes obscure to the point of incomprehensibility, the same accusation has often been levelled at the verses in their original language. More seriously, it is important to render as literally as possible the historical information derived from the verses by the author of the prose, to demonstrate how they were used as source material.

Explanations of kennings and verse forms, information about the poets and instances of textual emendation from other texts are given in the footnotes. Readers in search of a full introduction to the workings of skaldic verse are referred to the books by E. O. G. Turville-Petre (1976) and Frank (1978).

Alongside each verse other texts in which the same verse occurs have been noted, but these notes are not exhaustive (reference to Snorri's *Separate Saga of St Óláfr*, for example, is not made as this

usually coincides with the more readily accessible *Heimskringla*). Where appropriate a reference, with verse number, is given to the long poem to which the verse is believed to belong, according to Finnur Jónsson's standard edition, *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*, although the assignment of verses to named poems in this edition is sometimes speculative.

Fagrskinna has never before been translated complete into any language. The only other translation is that of Johann Schreiner, who in 1926 translated into modern Norwegian the part of the text covering the years up to the death of St Óláfr; a second edition was published in 1972.

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TRANSLATION

CHAPTER 1

[57] Hálfðan svarti (the Black), son of Guðrøðr veiðikonungr (Hunting-king),¹ had a larger kingdom than his ancestors; he had numerous followers and was popular. His wife was Ragnhildr, daughter of King Haraldr gullskegg (Gold-beard) of Sogn. They had one son called Haraldr. His maternal grandfather, who had given him his own name, took him to live with him and made him his foster-son, and left him all his kingdom after his death. When the young Haraldr was ten years old his grandfather died, and because he died without sons, his estate was inherited, as had been promised earlier, by his daughter's son. He was accepted as king over the district of Sogn, and in the same year he died. And then his father Hálfðan succeeded his son, and he appointed over the realm the jarl who was called Atli inn mjóvi (the Lean). In the same year that these two kings had died, Ragnhildr, the wife of King Hálfðan, fell sick and died, and the king took a second wife. She was also called Ragnhildr; her father was Sigurðr ormr í auga (Snake-in-eye), son of Ragnarr loðbrók (Hairy-breeches).² Hálfðan and his wife had a son who was named after his brother and called Haraldr.

There was one strange thing about Hálfðan; he never dreamed. He mentioned this fact to the man called Þorleifr spaki (the Wise), and asked for advice about what could be done about it. And he told him what he did himself when he was anxious to know about any matter: he went to sleep in a pigsty, and then he never failed [58] to dream.³ And the king did that, and this dream was revealed

¹ His nickname is *gofuglári* ('the Generous') in *Ynglingatal* 33 and *Af Upplendinga konungum* (*Hauksbók* 457).

² At this point there is the first of three later additions to the text, interpolated into the A version of *Fagskinna*. This gives an alternative account of the marriage of Hálfðan and the parentage of his son Haraldr hárfagri. It is translated here as Appendix I, 1 (see p. 296).

³ Variations on the idea of sleeping in a particular location to achieve a prophetic dream are found in other Old Norse sources (see Faulkes 1966, 12–13; Joan Turville-Petre 1988). Leland (1892, 252–53) asserts that the superstition about sleeping in a

to him. It seemed to him that he was naked, with his hair hanging in thick locks. Some of these reached to the ground, others to the middle of the leg or of the calf, or to the knee, or the middle of his side, but in some places it was no longer than to his neck, and in some only sprouted from his skull like short horns. And his locks were of many different colours, but one lock surpassed all the others in fairness, beauty and brightness. He told that dream to Þorleifr, and Þorleifr interpreted the dream as meaning that a great progeny would come from him, and his offspring would rule lands with great glory, and yet not all with equal glory. But one in particular would come from his line who would be better than all others; and people believe that that lock signified the blessed Óláfr, who of all kings of Norway is the holiest and brightest in heaven and on earth, as far as all people know.

The death of Hálfðan happened in this fashion. He accepted an invitation to a feast in Haðaland, and left there by sledge; then he was drowned in Rønd in Rykinsvík, close to where the watering-place for cattle was, and afterwards he was taken to Steinn in Hringaríki and buried there in a mound.⁴

CHAPTER 2

His son Haraldr succeeded to the kingdom after his father Hálfðan svarti. He was then a young man in count of years, but he had fully attained all the manly accomplishments that it befits a courtly king to have. He had a luxuriant growth of hair of wonderful colour, most like beautiful silk in appearance. He was the handsomest and strongest of all men, and how big he was can be seen from his

pigsty is known to 'the Roumanians and so-called Saxons, and probably all the Slavonian and gypsy inhabitants of Hungary', and cites a Tuscan 'fortune teller' who reported the belief that 'that *per avere un vero sogno*—to have a true dream—it was the most approved method known, and proceeded to explain how it should be done, in these words: "To learn the future in a dream one must sleep in a pigsty, and above all be sure that the pen is occupied by a *maiala incinta o gravida*—a sow with young. And he must sleep *alla boccone*, that is on his face, and crouched up, or else flat on his back, but not on his side.'" Leland explains the belief in terms of the association of the pig with fruitfulness and veracity, and more tentatively with the association of the boar with the god Freyr.

⁴ The second later addition in A gives a more extensive account; see Appendix I, 2. (pp. 296–97).

tombstone, which is in Haugasund.⁵ He was a man of great wisdom, far-sighted and ambitious; in addition he was supported by his good fortune and the providence that he should be the overlord [59] of the realm of Norway, so that the land has been made glorious by his family up till this time, and so it always will be. Old men attached themselves to him with wise counsels and support for his plans. Young warriors and men of prowess loved him for the sake of his splendid gifts of money and royal pomp, as says the poet Hornklofi, an old friend of kings who had been in courts constantly since his childhood.⁶

1. Hear, heroes in arm-rings,⁷
while of Haraldr I tell,
the exploits in arms
of the affluent ruler.
The words I will tell
which I heard a maiden
of bright-tressed beauty
bandy with a raven.

Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál) 1

- [60] 2. Wise seemed the shield-woman—
no one within hearing—
the war-valiant valkyrie
well-versed in bird language.
The white-throated woman
with bright arms saluted
Hymir's head-scratcher⁸
on the high meadow crag.

Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál) 2

⁵ See the surviving modern place-name Haraldshaugen ('Haraldr's mound').

⁶ Hornklofi [Horn-clawed] is named as Þorbjörn hornklofi in *Heimskringla* (I 112). The name Hornklofi, a *heiti* for 'raven', presumably derives from this poem, known as *Hrafnsmál* [Speech of the Raven], or *Haraldskvæði* [Haraldr's Poem], of which fifteen verses are cited in *Fagrskinna* and attributed to 'Hornklofi'. Verses 18–22 below, attributed in *Fagrskinna* to Þjóðólfr from Hvinir, are believed to belong to the same poem (*Heimskringla* attributes them to Hornklofi); three further verses are found elsewhere. Hornklofi is also cited as poet of verses 23–25, believed to belong to the poem *Glymdrápa* [Clash-poem], which is named and attributed to Hornklofi in *Heimskringla* (I 101).

Haraldskvæði is composed in the eddic metre *málaháttir* [speech metre], in what has been described as 'pre-scaldic style' (E. O. G. Turville-Petre 1976, 12). This lacks the strict syllable count of fully-fledged *dróttkvætt*; its lines vary from five to nine syllables. As in eddic poetry, alliteration is often on only one syllable in each half-line.

⁷ *hringberandi*: 'ring-wearer or shield-bearer', warrior.

⁸ *Hymis hausreytir*: 'Hymir's (a giant's) head-scratcher', apparently a kenning for 'raven', but the allusion is obscure.

3. ‘What worries you, ravens? *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál) 3*
 Where have you come from
 with beaks all bloody
 at break of day?
 Flesh clings to your talons,
 carrion scents your mouths;
 your night was passed near where
 you knew corpses were lying.’

4. The eagle’s sworn brother⁹ *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál) 4*
 stirred its grey feathers,
 its pointed beak wiping,
 pondered its answer:
 ‘Haraldr we have followed,
 Halfdán’s son,
 scion of the Ynglingar,¹⁰
 since we hatched from our eggs.

- [61] 5. ‘I thought you would know the king, *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál) 5*
 who lives at Kvinnar;
 king of the Northmen,
 deep keels he controls,
 reddened rounds,
 red shields,
 oars all tarry,
 awnings sodden.

6. ‘He will drink Yule at sea *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál) 6*
 if he decides the matter,
 the prince forward-looking,
 Freyr’s game¹¹ he will play;
 bored from youth by fireside
 basking, indoors sitting,
 the ladies’ warm bower
 and wadded downy mittens.’

It is shown in this narrative what the custom of King Haraldr was at the time when he was conquering the kingdom. The same poem goes on to ask in this fashion about his generosity:

⁹ *amar eiðbróðir*: ‘sworn brother of the eagle’, raven.

¹⁰ *ynglingr*: ‘descendant of Yngvi’; also, by extension, a poetical word for ‘king’. Haraldr hárfagri and his descendants traced their ancestry to Yngvi-Freyr, legendary king of the Swedes (see *Hkr* I 24); this descent is detailed in the poem *Ynglingatal* by the ninth-century poet Þjóðólfr from Hvinir.

¹¹ *Freyr leikr*: ‘game of Freyr’, presumably battle, though the god Freyr is usually associated with fertility rather than war.

7. 'How free in giving
to the land's defenders
is the speeder of battle,¹²
to his fine skilled warriors?' *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 15
- [62] 8. 'Greatly gladdened
are glorious men of strife¹³
who in the court of Haraldr
are casting dice;
gold they are granted
and goods most fine,
Hunnish weapons
and eastern slave-girls. *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 16
9. 'Then they are eager
when war is expected;
swift to leap up
and swing the oars,
burst the oar-loops,
break the tholes;
I think they churn the wake bravely
at the king's bidding.' *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 17
10. 'Of the gear of skalds I will ask you, *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 18
since you seem to speak wisely;
the groups of poets
you must plainly know,
those who are staying with Haraldr.'
- [63] 11. 'From their gear it is seen *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 19
and their golden rings
that they are close to the king;
red cloaks they possess,
and coloured shields,
swords wound with silver,
ring-woven mailcoats,
gilded sword-straps
and graven helmets,
arm-rings in plenty
picked for them by Haraldr.'

This bears witness to the king's generosity. His champions, who were so impetuous and fearless that they fought in the forefront of the

¹² *ógnflyttr*: 'hastener of battle', warlike king.

¹³ *rógbirtingr*: 'man glorious in strife', warrior.

army in battle, glorified him by their service and their onslaughts; they wore wolfskin tunics instead of coats of mail, as is said here:

12. 'Of berserks'¹⁴ gear I will ask you, *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 20
 imbiber of carrion-sea;¹⁵
 what is the state of
 those who storm into warfare,
 men bold in battle?'

13. 'They are called wolf-skins, *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 21
 warriors who carry
 bloody shields in battle;
 [64] spears they redden
 when they join the fighting,
 drawn up side by side there;
 only on men of action,
 as it seems, that ruler
 sharp-witted shows reliance,
 shield-hewers in battle.'

Here it is also said that King Haraldr had a jester in his retinue:

14. 'About jugglers and jesters *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 22
 I have asked you little;
 how do Andaðr
 and his fellows amuse
 the company in Haraldr's house?'

15. 'A dog Andaðr fondles— *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 23
 its ears are lacking—
 with foolish pranks
 prompts the prince to laughter;
 and there are others
 who must go round the fire
 bearing burning shavings;
 fools' caps flapping
 fast tucked under their belts,
 rogues ripe for kicking.'

¹⁴ *berserkr*, ('bear-shirt') or *ulfhæðinn* ('wolf-skin'), a man who fell into, or was able to work himself into, an animal-like state in which his strength was greatly enhanced and he seemed to be invulnerable to weapons. The berserks' apparently supernatural strength was often said to be bestowed on them by Óðinn (see the description of Óðinn's warriors in *Ynglingasaga*, *Hkr* I 17).

¹⁵ *bergir hræsævar*: 'partaker of carrion-sea (blood)', raven.

In all these ways he became outstanding and secure in his patrimony, and he further extended the kingdom in many ways, as examples show; partly through battles, partly through fair speech and [65] friendship with those who had governed before, partly through the workings of fate, partly through deep scheming and long planning or accident of some kind.

CHAPTER 3

When Haraldr had succeeded to his inheritance, he gave Atli mjóvi the title of jarl, and the same revenues he had had from his father Hálfðan. That consisted of Sygnafylki and Fjalir; his main residence was at Gaular. King Haraldr, when he went on a progress to feasts and there was no unrest, took with him sixty retainers; the number included all the men of rank, but not all those who served at the feasts. But because of business and duties, the king could not come at the intended time to attend the feasts given in Sogn by his jarl Atli. He sent his men there to attend the feasts, and so it happened that for three years he did not attend them himself. The king's men invited their friends and relations to come with them, and more than a *hundred* (120) men attended the feasts. They were bad guests and there was a lot of unruly behaviour at their drinking bouts. In the fourth summer, when the king's men came for the feast, Jarl Atli drove them away in disgrace and refused to put up with their arrogance, and told the king to attend the feast himself or accept payment in lieu of it. These men met King Haraldr at a feast held by Hákon gamli (the Old) at Hlaðir north in Þrándheimr and told him how they had been slighted. The king was angry when he heard this news. Then Hákon asked the king for the fief over Sygnafylki on the same terms that Atli had held it, and the king granted it to him. In the same year Hákon gamli went with an army of Þróendir and Háleygir south through the country. Then Jarl Atli met him; they encountered in the bay Stafanessvágir in Fjalir, and fought fiercely and with great daring. There Jarl Hákon fell, and his men were defeated. So says Eyvindr skáldaspillir (Poet-spoiler), father of Hárekr of Þjótta, in the poem which is called *Háleygjatal*:¹⁶

¹⁶ Eyvindr Finnson skáldaspillir ('destroyer or despoiler of poets, plagiarist') is

- [66] 16. Hákon, tree
 of Høgni's daughter,¹⁷
 was weapons' target
 when he did battle;
 and as spear-points
 sounded, life
 the heir of Freyr
 at Fjalir lost. *Háleygjatal* 9
Hkr I 108
17. And where fell
 the friends of Hákon,
 Stone-garðr's¹⁸ son,
 at Stafanes
 the bay with men's
 blood was mingled,
 in loud clash
 of Lóðurr's friend.¹⁹ *Háleygjatal* 10
Hkr I 108

named here and in *Heimskringla* as the author of *Háleygjatal* [catalogue of [the rulers of] the Háleygir]: 'Eyvindr skáldaspillir enumerated the ancestors of Jarl Hákon [Sigurðarson, a descendant of Hákon gamli; see chapters 15ff. below] in the poem called *Háleygjatal*, which was composed in honour of Jarl Hákon' (*Hkr* I 4). The poem is also named in *Snorra Edda* (*Gylf* 6). It traces the jarl's ancestry to the god Yngvi-Freyr, and is thought to be modelled on the *Ynglingatal* of Þjóðólfr from Hvinir. Like that poem it is in *kviðuháttir*, a metre derived from the eddic *fornyrðislag*, but with syllables counted: three syllables in each odd line and four in each even line. Eyvindr's nickname presumably refers to his imitation of other poets, since his poem after the death of Hákon inn góði (see below, verses 37–39, 42–45, 52–55), named as *Hákonarmál* in *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* I 186, 193), also follows another poet's model, as the author of *Fagrskinna* comments: 'he composed it in imitation of the one which Gunnhildr had had composed about Eiríkr, in which Óðinn invited him home to Valhöll' (see p. 66, below).

Of the fourteen occasional verses attributed to Eyvindr, all in *dróttkvætt* metre, twelve are cited in *Fagrskinna*; the remaining two, preserved in *Heimskringla*, are attached to an anecdote, unknown elsewhere, about Eyvindr's dealings with the Icelanders, about whom he is said to have composed a *drápa* (*Hkr* I 221).

¹⁷ *Hogna meyjar víðr*: 'tree of Høgni's daughter, warrior'. Men are commonly referred to by tree-names of masculine gender in kennings. Høgni is the father of Hildr who presides over a legendary never-ending battle (*Skáldask* I 72); *hildr* is also a common noun for 'battle'.

¹⁸ MS *mágar Haralds* (B) 'of Haraldr's son', *margir alls* (A) 'many of all'. These readings are replaced here by the version of *Heimskringla*, *magar Hallgarðs* 'of Hallgarðr's son'. The first element of this name, *hallr*, means 'stone', a riddling substitution for the synonym *grjót* which occurs in the name of Hákon's father Grjótgarðr (Hákon is given the patronymic Grjótgarðsson in *Hkr* I 99).

¹⁹ *gný vinar Lóðurs*: 'clash of Lóðurr's friend (Óðinn), battle'. Lóðurr is named as a companion of Óðinn in *Völuspá* 18 (*Poetic Edda* 5).

Jarl Atli was wounded and died five nights later, on the island since called Atley. After that parting of the jarls, Atli's sons fled from the country. But Sigurðr, son of Hákon gamli, made friends with King Haraldr and received from him the title of jarl. After that Haraldr took possession of the whole of Þrándheimr, and the land all the way north to Finnmörk; some submitted to him willingly and in friendship, some in fear. Then Haraldr made a vow that his hair should never be cut until he received tribute from every inland valley and outlying headland, as far as Norway extends east to the borderlands and north to the sea. After this, many battles took place over a long period. The last and greatest battle he fought in [67] Hafrsfjörðr north of Jaðarr, against two kings from the land above, Kjǫtvi inn auðgi (the Rich) and Haklangr.²⁰ With them came many powerful men with a great fleet, as the poet Þjóðólfr from Hvinir says:²¹

18. Hear now how there
in Hafrsfjörðr grappled
the king of high kin
with Kjǫtvi the²² wealthy!
Warships sailed westward
willing for battle,
with dragon-heads gaping
and graven prows.

Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál) 7
Hkr I 115

19. They were laden with warriors
and with white shields,
spears brought from Britain,
blades of Frankish forging.
The berserks bellowed;
battle was upon them.
Howled wolfskin-wearers²³
and weapons rattled.²⁴

Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál) 8
Hkr I 116

²⁰ *Heimskringla* enumerates as Haraldr's adversaries the people of Hǫrðaland, Rogaland, Agðir and Þelamörk; among the other leaders, Kjǫtvi is named there as king of Agðir and Þórir haklangr (Long-chin) as his son (*Hkr* I 114). Kjǫtvi is named in *Vatnsdæla saga* (23–24) as Ásbjörn kjǫtvi. The nickname means 'fleshy'. Þórir is mentioned in verse 20 of *Fisk* as Haklangr.

²¹ Verses 18–22 are attributed in *Heimskringla* to 'Hornklofi' (see note 6 above).

²² MSS *Kjǫtvan* replaced here by *Hkr Kjǫtva inn*.

²³ MSS *ænn uðu* (B), *ymdu* (A), replaced by *Hkr emjuðu*.

²⁴ MSS *i sar* (B), *i sar jam* (A), replaced by *Hkr isqm*.

- [68] 20. The ambitious man they tested *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 9
 who taught them to flee, *Hkr* I 116
 the lord of the Northmen
 who lives at Útsteinn.
 He steered steeds of Nǫkkvi²⁵
 seeing battle in prospect.
 Hard were shields²⁶ hammered
 till Haklangr fell.
21. The fat-necked king flagged, *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 10
 defending the land against *Hkr* I 117
 Shock-head,²⁷ shielded
 his ships with an island;
 The wounded thrust themselves
 under thwarts, raising
 their arses heavenwards,
 heads stuck in the bilges.
22. On their backs they bore, gleaming— *Haraldskvæði*
 bombarded with stones— *(Hrafnsmál)* 11
 hall-tiles of Svafnir,²⁸ *Hkr* I 117
 the timorous soldiers.
 Home from Hafrsfjörðr
 hastened eastern bumpkins,
 their minds on mead-drinking,
 made tracks over Jaðarr.

Here Hornklofi remembers this battle:²⁹

23. A child in age, the stern destroyer *Glymdrápa* 3 (1st half)
 of the pale steed of the billow³⁰ *Skáldsk* I 74
 sent, at the most auspicious
 season, ship's prows to sea thrusting;

²⁵ *Nǫkkva stóð*: 'stud of Nǫkkvi', fleet of ships. Nǫkkvi, elsewhere a common noun meaning 'boat' (as in *Skáldsk* I, v. 491/8), is here the name of a sea-king (cf. *Skáldsk* I, v. 354/4).

²⁶ MSS *líðum* replaced by *Hkr hlífum*.

²⁷ *Lúfa*, 'Shock-head', Haraldr's nickname, alluding to his oath not to cut (or, according to *Heimskringla*, comb) his hair before uniting Norway. After he succeeded in this, he achieved the nickname *hárfagri* 'Fine-hair'.

²⁸ *Svafnis salnæfar*: 'Svafnir's (Óðinn's) hall-tiles', shields, with which the roof of Valhøll was tiled (*Gylf* 7).

²⁹ Verses 23–25 are believed to belong to Þorbjörn hornklofi's *Glymdrápa* (see note 6 above).

³⁰ *bǫru fák ens bleika*: 'the pale horse of the wave', ship. A *hvjóðr* 'clearer, destroyer' of a ship is one who kills the men on it, a sea-fighter.

there storm drove the plank-steed³¹
 south, so that in battle³²
 the shield-bearer³³ by the ship's side
 confronted two rulers.

Glymdrápa 4 (2nd half)
Hkr I 103

24. And challenging chieftains
 exchanged speechless greetings
 with loud shots³⁴ in battle; the shouting
 of red shields³⁵ continued.

Glymdrápa 4
Hkr I 103

- [70] 25. The king stirred against soldiers
 a spear-storm,³⁶ where red wounds
 spat blood; in din of Skögul³⁷
 sounded mailcoat goslings,³⁸
 when on the prow in presence
 of the prince, men fell lifeless;
 the sword on shields sang out;
 the stainer of blades³⁹ had victory.

Glymdrápa 5
Hkr I 105–06
Skáldsk I 66

After this the land was brought under control, and taxes were paid by both inland and coastal regions. Now he had become a man fully developed in strength, stature and counsels. His hair was long and tangled; for that reason he was called Lúfa (Shock-head). Then Rognvaldr, Jarl of Mœrr, cut his hair and gave him a nickname, calling him Haraldr inn hárfagri (Finchair). He was more than twenty years old then. He had many children, and all the kings of Norway are [71] descended from him. It was for ten years that he fought to gain the country before he became the sole king of Norway. He brought good peace and reformation to the country.⁴⁰

Haraldr had twenty sons by many women, but only two became kings in Norway: Eiríkr blóðøx (Bloodaxe) and Hákon góði (the Good). Eiríkr blóðøx was one of the oldest of his sons and Hákon

³¹ *borð-Hölkvir*: 'board-Hölkvir'. Hölkvir was the name of the hero Högni's horse (*Skáldsk* I 89); a horse of boards is a ship.

³² MSS *fyrir hildar* replaced by *Hkr til hildar*.

³³ *hlífar valdr*: 'wielder of protection, i.e. of a shield', warrior.

³⁴ MSS *dunskotum* replaced by *Hkr dynskotum*.

³⁵ *randa rödd*: 'voice of shields', the noise of battle.

³⁶ *geira hregg*: 'storm of spears', battle.

³⁷ *Sköglar dyn*: 'noise of Skögul (a valkyrie)', battle.

³⁸ *brynggl*: 'byrnie-goslings', (feathered) arrows.

³⁹ *eggliuðr*: 'blade-colourer', warrior.

⁴⁰ At this point a third additional narrative is interpolated in A; see Appendix I, 3 (p. 297).

one of the youngest. The third was Óláfr digrbeinn (Fat-leg), the fourth Björn kaupmaðr (the Merchant), whom some people called buna (Ungartered); fifth was Guðþormr, sixth was Hálfðan svartí (the Black), seventh was Dagr, eighth was Hringr, ninth was Guðrøðr skirja (Young Cow), tenth Rognvaldr, eleventh Sigtryggr, twelfth Fróði, thirteenth Hrærekr, fourteenth Tryggvi, fifteenth Gunnrøðr, sixteenth Eysteinn, seventeenth Sigurðr hrísi (the Bastard), eighteenth Guðrøðr ljómi (Beam of Light), nineteenth Hálfðan hýrbeinn (Sweet-leg), whom some call háføta (Long-leg), twentieth Rognvaldr rykill (Snatch), whom some call Ragnarr.

CHAPTER 4

At that time England was ruled by a young king, Aðalsteinn góði (Athelstan the Good), who was then one of the highest in rank in the northern lands.⁴¹ He sent his men to Norway to see King Haraldr with a message such that the messenger went before the king and gave him a sword decorated with gold on both the hilt and the haft, and the whole of the scabbard was decked with gold and silver and set with precious stones. The messenger held out the sword hilt to the king and spoke thus:

‘Here is the sword that Aðalsteinn, King of the English, has sent you as a gift, my lord king.’

The king took hold of the haft, and at once the messenger said: ‘Now you have accepted it as our king wished, and you shall [72] now be his servant and receiver of his sword.’⁴²

King Haraldr realised that the gift had been sent in mockery; he thought carefully and asked his counsellors whether the messenger should be killed, or the king put to shame in some other way; he had no wish to be subject to him or to any man in the world. Then King Haraldr was mindful, with the persuasions of his men, that it did not befit a king to kill another king’s messengers, who were doing no more than bearing their master’s message; rather he must make plot answer plot and word answer word, and he allowed the English king’s men to leave in peace.

⁴¹ Athelstan became king of England in 925.

⁴² A *sverðtakari* (sword-taker) was a man who had laid his hand on the king’s sword in token of homage.

The next summer King Haraldr sent a ship west to England, and got his best friend, Haukr hábrók (Long-leg),⁴³ to command it. King Haraldr put into his charge a boy who had been born of his bond-woman, Þóra morstǫng. She came from a family in Mostr in South Hǫrðaland. This boy was called Hákon, and his mother claimed that he was the son of King Haraldr. Haukr came west to England and met King Aðalsteinn in London, and came into his presence when the meal-tables had been cleared away, and greeted the king. The king bade him welcome.

Then Haukr said, 'Lord, King Haraldr of the Norwegians has sent you fair greetings, and he has also sent you a white bird, well trained, and asked you to train it still better in future.'

He took the child from the folds of his cloak and set him on the king's lap. The king looked at the boy, while Haukr stood before the king and did not bow to him. He had at his left side a keen sword under his cloak, and all his men were similarly equipped, and there were thirty of them altogether.

Then King Aðalsteinn said, 'Whose is this child?'

Then Haukr replied, 'He belongs to a slave-woman in Norway, and King Haraldr said that you were to bring up her child.'

The king answered, 'This boy does not have slave's eyes.'

Haukr said, 'The mother is a slave, and she says that King Haraldr is the father, and now the boy is your foster-son,⁴⁴ king, and is entitled to the same care from you as your own son.'

The king answered, 'Why would I bring up a child for Haraldr, [73] even if it were his wife's child, much less a slave-woman's child,' and with one hand he reached for a sword which lay beside him, and with the other hand seized the child.

Then Haukr said, 'You have just fostered Haraldr's son, King, and set him on your knee, and you can murder him now if you wish, but you will not be able to get rid of all King Haraldr's sons any the sooner for that, and it will still be said in future as it has been until now, that the man who brings up another's child is of lower status.'

After that Haukr turned away and twisted the cloak around his

⁴³ A *páttir* (short story), plainly fictitious, is told about Haukr in *Flateyjarbók*, I 577-81.

⁴⁴ *knúsetningr* 'one set on the knee'. To set a child on one's knee was to adopt it for fostering.

left arm, and he had drawn the sword with his right hand. Then the last of his men to have come in went out first. And in this way they went to their ship, and there was a favourable wind blowing from the land out to sea, and they made the most of it and sailed to Norway. And when they came before the king he thanked Haukr warmly for his mission. But King Aðalsteinn had Hákon brought up there in his court, and he has since been called Aðalsteinsföstri (Athelstan's Foster-son).

From such dealings between the kings it could be seen that each of them wanted to be considered greater than the other, but no undue disparity in their dignity arose from this cause, and each of them ruled his kingdom until his dying day.⁴⁵

CHAPTER 5

Eiríkr blóðøx was the son of King Haraldr whom the king loved most. And because King Haraldr was infirm with age, he honoured Eiríkr by leading him to his high seat and establishing him as lord within the court and giving him the title of king. He gave him rule over his retinue and authority to conduct the king's business and judge the law of the land. In that way the kingdom continued for three years before King Haraldr died. He died of [74] sickness in Rógaland, and there is a mound in his memory in Haugasund. He had then been king for seventy-three years.⁴⁶

After King Haraldr, Eiríkr blóðøx succeeded to the kingdom, while Hákon was west in England. King Eiríkr was married to Gunnhildr, who was called konungamóðir (Mother of Kings), daughter of Qzurr toti (Teat) or lafskeggr (Wag-beard) from Hálogaland in the north.⁴⁷ King Eiríkr was a big, strong man and a bold warrior, handsome

⁴⁵ According to William of Malmesbury, King Haraldr of Norway sent a finely decorated ship to Athelstan as a gift; Athelstan's fostering of Haraldr's son was probably in recognition of their friendship.

⁴⁶ The same figure appears in *Nóregs konunga tal* 9 (*Skj* B I 576) and *Historia Norvegiae* (HN 2003, 80–81). Theodoricus (Theodoricus 1998, 5) and Ari's *Íslendingabók* (*Ísl* 6) say that Haraldr ruled for 70 years; according to *Agrip* (*Ágr* 6–7) Haraldr ruled for 60 years after the ten years he spent unifying Norway.

⁴⁷ Gunnhildr was in fact probably the daughter of King Gormr of Denmark, as stated in *Historia Norvegiae* (HN 2003, 82–83, 139), but Icelandic sources invariably share *Fagrskinna's* account of her parentage and negative portrayal of her personality; see Nordal 1941.

in appearance, persuadable, harsh in temperament, greedy for money, improvident, blessed with victory, and a great warrior. His wife Gunnhildr was a fine-looking and highborn woman, not tall, with a profound mind, talkative and of grim temper, not steadfast in friendship, rather eager for money and lands. They had several children, who were named thus: Gamli, Guðþormr, Haraldr, Erlingr, Ragnfrøðr, Sigurðr slefa (Slobber). Ragnhildr was their daughter, who was married in Orkney.

This period was short, yet it seemed quite long enough to the people, for they considered that the king was persuadable, and the queen malicious. That was manifested in the fact that Eiríkr caused to be killed Björn kaupmaðr, Óláfr digrbeinn and others of his brothers. Many people said that he must want to get rid of his brothers and have sole control of the kingdom and so raise up his sons to power after his day, and because of that he grew unpopular with all the population.

CHAPTER 6

Hákon inn góði (the Good) was brought up with King Aðalsteinn, and was baptised there as a child. It is said of him that he was like his father in good looks, stronger and bigger than his forefathers had been. Þórálfr Skólmsson⁴⁸ was considered as strong a man as Hákon, but no third was their match in strength. Hákon was of gentle temperament,⁴⁹ thoughtful, of wise counsel, [75] with a good memory, cheerful, sincere, wise, with more courtly accomplishments than other men in all feats of arms, in terms of strength and skill. His foster-father the king loved him more than anyone else, and so did all people to whom his name was known. Aðalsteinn gave him a sword with a hilt of gold, and Hákon tested it severely by hewing into a millstone with it, and it pierced all the way to the centre hole. After that it was called Kvernbitr (Quernbiter).⁵⁰ That sword Hákon carried to his dying day.

⁴⁸ Þórálfr (or Þórólfr) was an Icclander, mentioned in *Landnámabók* (257), *Íslendinga drápa* 13 (*Skj* B I 542), *Grettis saga* (187) and *Orms þátr Stórolfssonar* (*Flateyjarbók*, I 521).

⁴⁹ Here begins a lacuna in the B text; the A text is followed to p. 64 below.

⁵⁰ The sword is named as *Kvernbiti* here (and in *Ágrip*), but as *Kvernbitr* in chapter 12 below and in *Heimskringla*.

CHAPTER 7

One year after King Haraldr had died his passing became known west in England, and that same summer, on the advice of his foster-father Aðalsteinn, Hákon went to Norway. Bad weather overtook them at sea, and the troop was separated; some perished, but others got to Norway, and those who landed closest to where King Eiríkr was went to see him and told him that his brother Hákon must have been lost at sea. This story the king laid before Gunnhildr and said it had turned out well, so that he had no need to fear Hákon as a threat to his kingdom. She answered in this way:⁵¹

26. Há-, astride the board-stallion
 of the sea,⁵² -kon rode eastwards;
 peerless, lets not sea pierce
 prow; the prince has reached Firðir.

Because of her magic arts she knew that Hákon was alive, and had brought his ship safe to Norway. He behaved wisely [76] and cleverly, made no demands, made friends with everyone, got on good terms with his counsellors, remembered old men with wise counsels, shared gifts among laymen and young people, trained alongside them in sports and amusements, displayed his attainments amongst assembled people in many ways. For these reasons every man praised him; reports sprang up about him which flew into everyone's house. After that all longed for him, but they feared the tyranny and lawlessness which had set in among the inhabitants of the land, and they all blamed Gunnhildr; there was no one who argued against her being responsible for that. That winter passed without Hákon having the title of king, but in the summer the *bændr* put great pressure on Eiríkr's rule, and increased Hákon's power, and accepted Hákon as king over them; he was nearly twenty years old when he came into the country.

After that the *bændr* turned against Eiríkr and were no longer willing to endure Gunnhildr's wickedness. On the advice of wise men Eiríkr left the country and went to see King Aðalsteinn in response

⁵¹ This verse is found only in *Fsk* (A), since the lacuna in (B) continues.

⁵² *bǫru borðhestr*: 'board-stallion of the billow (sea)', ship.

to the friendly words he had sent by his foster-son Hákon, that Eiríkr would be welcome with King Aðalsteinn as long as he did not fall out with his brother Hákon or fight against him. King Aðalsteinn gave King Eiríkr asylum and authority in Northumbria.⁵³ There Eiríkr accepted baptism and the true faith. Northumbria is named in the fashion of the Norsemen because Norsemen have long had power over that land. Many places there have been given names in the Norse tongue, for example Grimsby (*Grímsbær*) and Hawfleet (*Haugsfliót*).⁵⁴

CHAPTER 8

King Eiríkr, when he came to power in Northumbria, considered how extensive his father's lands had been when he ruled over the whole of Norway and many tributary lands, and thought that he himself had little in the way of authority, and for that reason he went on [77] plundering expeditions in the British Isles and raided widely around them. The sons of Jarl Torf-Einarr were Arnkell, Erlendr and Þorfinnr hausakljúfr (Skull-cleaver). Þorfinnr's son Hávarðr married King Eiríkr's daughter Ragnhildr. It happened one summer that King Eiríkr was raiding in the west of Scotland and around Ireland and Wales, and he continued the expedition until he came south around England and raided there as well as in other places, because King Aðalsteinn had died by then, and his son King Játmundr (Edmund) was ruling England.⁵⁵

Eiríkr had such a large army that five kings accompanied him. Because Eiríkr was a very bold and successful warrior, he had such confidence in himself and his forces that he went far inland and

⁵³ According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle the Northumbrians adopted Eiríkr as king in 948, nine years after Athelstan's death, against the will of the English King Eadred (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* I 112).

⁵⁴ According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle York was conquered in 866 and 875 by Vikings, in Norse tradition sons of the legendary Ragnarr loðbrók, as Snorri records: 'Northumbria had mostly been settled by Norsemen since the sons of Loðbrók conquered the land. Danes and Norwegians often made raids there after they had lost power over the land' (*Hkr* I 153). *Haugsfliót* is rendered *Hauksfliót* in *Heimskringla* and other sources.

⁵⁵ According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Athelstan died in 939 and was succeeded by his brother Edmund, who ruled until 946. Eiríkr died in 954 in the reign of Eadred (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* I 110; see note 53 above).

went raiding everywhere. Then King Óláfr came against him; he was a tributary king of King Játmundr.⁵⁶ They fought, and Eiríkr was overpowered by the land army, and he fell there with all his troop, and with him fell Torf-Einarr's sons Arnkell and Erlendr. After Eiríkr's death Gunnhildr had a poem composed about him, as if Óðinn was greeting him in Valhøll,⁵⁷ and it begins like this:⁵⁸

27. 'What kind of dream is it,' said Óðinn, *Eiríksmál* 1
Skáldsk I 10
 in which just before daybreak
 I thought I cleared Valhøll
 for coming of slain men?
 I waked the Einherjar,⁵⁹
 bade valkyries rise up,
 to strew the bench
 and scour the beakers,

- [78] wine to carry *Eiríksmál* 2
Skáldsk I 10
 as for a king's coming;
 here to me I expect
 heroes' coming from the world,
 certain great ones,
 so glad is my heart.'

28. 'What thunders there,' said Bragi,⁶⁰ *Eiríksmál* 3
 'Like a thousand stirring,
 or too mighty a multitude?
 All the benches are creaking
 as if Baldr⁶¹ is coming
 back to the halls of Óðinn.'

29. 'Words of folly,' said Óðinn, *Eiríksmál* 4
 'speak not, wise Bragi,
 when you well know the truth:
 it resounds for Eiríkr,

⁵⁶ This is presumably Óláfr Sigtryggsson (Kvaran), who had reigned briefly in York before Eiríkr and briefly displaced him in 949.

⁵⁷ *Valhøll*, 'hall of the slain': Óðinn's hall, where heroes who die in battle are entertained in preparation for the battle against the gods' foes at Ragnarøk.

⁵⁸ This poem is named as *Eiríksmál* in *Snorra Edda* where the first ten lines are quoted (*Skáldsk* I 10); the rest of the poem is found only in *Fsk* (A).

⁵⁹ *Einherjar*, 'unique warriors?': warriors entertained by Óðinn in Valhøll.

⁶⁰ *Bragi*: god of poetry.

⁶¹ *Baldr*: Óðinn's son, who was innocently killed by his brother Høðr. According to *Gylfaginning*, after Baldr's death his brother Hermóðr rode to Hel on an unsuccessful mission to rescue him from the underworld (*Gylf* 46–47).

who will be coming here,
the prince, to the halls of Óðinn.

30. ‘Sigmundr and Sinfjötli,’⁶² *Eiríksmál* 5
rise up speedily,
and go to greet the ruler;
invite him in
if Eiríkr it be,
whom I now expect to see.’

31. ‘Why do you expect Eiríkr,’ said Sigmundr, *Eiríksmál* 6
‘more than other kings?’
‘Because many lands,’ said Óðinn,
‘with his sword he has reddened,
and a bloodied blade carried.’

- [79] 32. ‘Why take away his victory, *Eiríksmál* 7
since valiant you thought him?’
‘For the future is uncertain,’ said Óðinn,
‘the hoary wolf is looking
grimly⁶³ at the gods’ dwellings.’⁶⁴

33. ‘Hail now, Eiríkr,’ said Sigmundr, *Eiríksmál* 8
‘here you shall be welcome;
brave hero, enter the hall.
This I will ask you:
what lords come with you
from the clashing of blades in battle?’

34. ‘They are five kings,’ said Eiríkr; *Eiríksmál* 9
‘I will tell you the names of all;’⁶⁵
I myself am the sixth.’

Here it says that five kings fell with him, and also what a great warrior he was. Glúmr Geirason also says in his poem⁶⁶ that before

⁶² *Sigmundr and Sinfjötli*: legendary heroes of the Völsung family.

⁶³ *greypr* ‘fierce, grim’ is added by editors to complete the metre.

⁶⁴ The wolf Fenrir was to defeat Óðinn at Ragnarök; the god was constantly in search of warriors like Eiríkr to support him in this battle.

⁶⁵ Although the poem is not cited or mentioned in *Heimskringla*, the five kings who died with Eiríkr are enumerated there: ‘Guthormr and his two sons, Ívarr and Hárekr; Sigurðr and Rognvaldr also fell there’ (*Hkr* I 154). It is likely that Snorri derived this information from *Eiríksmál*, although the list is not preserved in the part of the poem cited in *Fagrskinna*.

⁶⁶ According to the thirteenth-century list of poets *Skáldatal*, the Icelandic poet

King Haraldr died Eiríkr plundered south around Halland and Skáney and extensively around Denmark, and he went all the way around Kúrland and Eistland, and plundered in many other countries around the Baltic. He also raided extensively round Sweden and Gautland. He went raiding north in Finnmark and all the way to Bjarmaland. On this expedition he saw Gunnhildr for the first time. She was being fostered and educated then with Mottull, king of the Finns (Lapps); he was very skilled in magic. And after Eiríkr went to England he raided all over the British Isles. Because of this he was called Eiríkr blóðøx (Blood-axe). After King Eiríkr's death King Játmundr became hostile to Gunnhildr and Eiríkr's sons, citing as the cause that Eiríkr had made raids inland in the king's territory.⁶⁷ Then Gunnhildr left England [80] with her sons and went to Denmark, and got asylum there with Haraldr Gormsson. He fostered Eiríkr's son Haraldr and set him on his knee, and he remained in the court, but Gamli and Guðpormr went raiding first in the Baltic and then in Norway, and caused as much trouble as they could in King Hákon's kingdom.

CHAPTER 9

King Hákon succeeded to the kingdom of Norway two years after his father died. He was blessed with both popularity and prosperity. He established laws over all Norway with the help of Þorleifr inn spaki and other wise men, and King Óláfr inn helgi (the Saint) still made use of the greater part of those laws. In the sixteenth year of his reign he held a well-attended assembly at Mærin in Þrandheimr, and at that assembly the Þrændir gave the king two choices, that he should sacrifice according to the custom⁶⁸ of the earlier kings,

Glúmr Geirason composed for Eiríkr blóðøx as well as for his son Haraldr (see note 155), but nothing is known to survive of the poem referred to here. Finnur Jónsson speculatively attributes to it a two-line refrain found in the Third Grammatical Treatise, as well as one verse cited in *Heimskringla* and other sources where it is said to refer to Haraldr gráfeldr (*Slj* A1 75); Fidjestøl (1982, 90–91) disputes this, while conceding that there has been some confusion of the two kings in tradition. Glúmr is mentioned in *Landnámabók* (esp. p. 284), *Laxdæla saga* and other sagas of Icelanders.

⁶⁷ The manuscripts have *Eiríks konungs*, which is taken by editors to be a mistake for *á ríki konungs*.

⁶⁸ The manuscripts have *bæta aftr vandæði*, which editors correct to *blóta eptir vanda*.

and so observe what was laid down of old to bring prosperity and peace, or else they would drive him out of the kingdom, if he was not willing to lead them in this as in governing or in the receiving of taxes. The king was certainly not willing to do this. The king's friends and a great company mediated between the parties and asked the *bændr* to show forbearance to the king, and they said how beneficial their lord was for his followers and a great leader where law and customs were concerned. On the other side they urged the king to ameliorate the complaints and accept just a little piece for the sake of concord, so that the heathen worshippers would not consider him responsible for the downfall of the law. Out of the goodness of his heart and for the love of his friends he did as they asked and partook of the sacrifice.

CHAPTER 10

[81] In the seventeenth year of his reign he gave the title of king to his brother's son Tryggvi, son of Óláfr Haraldsson,⁶⁹ and gave him a kingdom east in Vík, establishing him to defend the land against Danes and raiders, who were doing great damage in the realm of Norway at that time. And it was brought about by God, in vengeance on Hákon for having sacrificed, that there was constant unrest in his kingdom caused by the sons of Gunnhildr and other Vikings, and they carried on this outrage in Brenneyjar,⁷⁰ Varðeyjar, in Myl and in Mystrasund. King Hákon went searching for them with two warships and encountered the Vikings south off Halland, Wends and Danes with ten ships; he fought with them and was victorious, and drove overboard a great proportion of their troop; he took all their goods, raided widely around Halland and Fjón, and with that went back to his kingdom.

⁶⁹ Tryggvi's father Óláfr digrbeinn is listed among the sons of Haraldr hárfagri in chapter 3 (p. 52 above).

⁷⁰ *Brenneyjar*, islands at the mouth of the Göta river off south-west Sweden, often mentioned in sagas as a haunt of raiders; see *Egils saga*: 'At that time that was a real den of Vikings, as many merchant ships sailed through the islands' (*Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar*, 121).

CHAPTER 11

In the twentieth year the sons of Eiríkr blóðøx, Gamli, Haraldr and Sigurðr, came north from Denmark with an army, and raided wherever they went in Norway. Then King Hákon was based with his troops in the southern part of Norðmœrr at a place called Freidarey, and Hákon was taken unawares when Gamli and the others with their army put into Féeyjarsund by Féey, in the vicinity of Freidarberg. People tried to mediate between them, but the sons of Eiríkr were not offering any alternative to a fight. King Hákon also did not allow himself to hesitate once he knew that his kinsmen were set on it.

There was an old man called Egill, who had been King Haraldr hárfagri's standard-bearer in his youth, but he was now infirm. He had said that he wanted it to be his lot to die in a full-blown battle. There was such a disparity in the size of the armies that there were six men against each one of Hákon's. Then Egill asked the king to give him one standard for each ship, [82] and a man for each standard, and there were ten standards there. But the sons of Eiríkr, when they saw that Hákon's force was much smaller, went ashore to draw up by Freidarberg and so advance against Hákon. A great battle took place there. And when the attack had begun, Egill went with ten men, and each had a standard in his hands, and they advanced along the slope which was up on a headland above where they were fighting, so that the standards could be seen from where the fighting was, but not those who went with them or carried them. Then the Danes saw where the standards were moving, and believed that the main body of the army must be there, and were afraid that it would get between them and the ships. Because of this, flight broke out in the army of Eiríkr's sons, and they themselves and their troops fled, and when they reached the height opposite Freidarberg they saw, looking back out onto Rastarkálfr, that there were no troops with the standards. Then Gamli had his standard raised up and his trumpet sounded. Their troops gathered together and drew up in battle array, but the Danes and the levied men were fleeing for the ships. Then King Hákon advanced against them with all his troops; the battle began again, and many fell on both sides, and it soon began to go against Gamli's side; their troop was divided, and Gamli and all the brothers fled on along the cliff, but some got up onto the cliff and were killed there, and others jumped down over the cliffs and died there. And when Gamli and

his men got to the shore he was seriously wounded by King Hákon and dived into the sea to escape, and drowned. Haraldr and Sigurðr, Gamli's brothers, reached the ships by swimming, but Hákon killed three shiploads of their troop there on the beach, and they piled them up on the ships; the slain were laid in those ships and burial mounds were raised up over them. A high memorial stone also stands in the place where Egill fell.

CHAPTER 12

King Eiríkr's sons, when they reached their ships, fled back south to Denmark, and King Hákon pursued them for a while, but they did not encounter each other again at that time. But although the sons of Eiríkr [83] had raided a great deal in Norway, they thought they had lost more in the expedition and were twice as ill-pleased as before with their situation, and with the support of the king of the Danes and the troops that he promised them they planned to return and avenge Gamli and their other men. To oppose this plan, King Hákon took the decision that the poll-tax⁷¹ which his father King Haraldr had imposed on the whole country should be collected in the coastal areas and in Þrándheimr and devoted to ship-building. He also imposed a *levy* in each district stating how many ships must be supplied, and how long they must be in terms of the number of rowing-benches, with men and weapons and provisions, against a foreign army, so that each man who was free and fit to fight must own a shield and a halberd and a hewing weapon; because the king did not often have a large following, he thought he would be able to take up troops from wherever he was located when the necessity and want for an army arose. Then a ship and armed men were ready wherever the king needed to ask for them. King Hákon had beacons built on the high mountains inland all over the country, so

⁷¹ *nefgildiskattr*, 'nose-tax'. The imposition of this tax is attributed to Haraldr hárfagri only in *Fagrskinna*, probably anachronistically; the word *nefgildi* is used elsewhere of a tax imposed by King Óláfr Haraldsson on the Icelanders in 1026: 'The king's message was that he ordered the Icelanders to . . . pay him from their country weregild and poll-tax (*nefgildi*), for each head a penny such that ten was worth one ell of *vaðmál* [homespun cloth]' (*Hkr* II 241).

that the war summons travelled in a week from the southernmost beacon to the northernmost community in Hálogaland.⁷²

It happened several times that the men who were guarding the southernmost beacon became aware that there were many warships around the islands and headlands, burning settlements and killing men. Then the beacons were lit and there was a rush to arms throughout the land. And yet these were neither the sons of Gunnhildr nor the army of the king of the Danes, for at that time there were many Vikings, among whom one chieftain commanded many troops and warships. But those men who came from the northern part of the country in the *levy* in response to the summons of the beacons travelled a long way before they learned the truth, that there was no need for them to have come, and that the Vikings who⁷³ had been raiding had now gone away. Many people disliked this business because no benefit arose from it, and the king himself was so displeased that he imposed the penalty of life and limb on any man who had been found guilty of giving a report of war which proved to be false. For this reason no one dared tell anyone else even if many ships were sailing along the coast from the south.

Then it happened on one occasion that Gunnhildr's sons sailed northwards from Denmark, passing far out to sea, and only came close enough to the coast for people to learn of their journey, and so they also learned where King Hákon was being feasted. They had ships well furnished with troops and weapons, and with them was a great Viking who was called Eyvindr skreyja (Braggart). King Hákon was being feasted, when they came, at Fitjar on Storð, and this news was kept hidden from him and all his men right up till the time when the ships were sailing from the south and were only a short distance from the island. Then King Hákon was presiding at the tables. Now a rumour spread among the courtiers that ships had been seen sailing, and some of them who had the sharpest eyes

⁷² The system of *leidangr*, a levy of ships, men and provisions called out in times of war, was effective by the eleventh century, but its status in this early period is uncertain. Hákon is said in *Fagreskinna* and other sources to have strengthened arrangements put in place by his father, but according to Gwyn Jones, 'We must either interpret the term "leidangr" (*leidangr*, Danish *leding*), naval levy, in a very general way in late written sources dealing with the Viking Age or, preferably, consider it an anachronism foisted in by analogy with much later times' (Jones 1984, 121). See Malmros 1993.

⁷³ At this point the B text resumes.

went outside, and each said to the other that they must be hostile forces, and they told each other to tell the king. But there was no one who would do so but Eyvindr Finnson, who was called skálda-spillir.

He went in before the king and said:

‘Fast goes the fleeting time, lord; but your feasting lasts long.’

The king answered, ‘Skald, what is passing now on the wide ways?’

Eyvindr said,

35. Bold Blood-axe’s avengers

Hkr I 183

bid us to mailcoat-meeting

ÓTM I 40

of harnessed lances;⁷⁴ little

leisure we have for sitting.

[85] Hard it is, though your honour

I hoped for, king, to carry—

let us wield ancient weapons

at once—news of war to a king.

Then the king answered, ‘Eyvindr, you are a fine warrior and a wise man; you would not tell news of war unless it was true.’

Then everyone said that it was true that ships were sailing, and were not far from the island. At once the tables were taken up and the king went out to see the host. And when he had seen it he called his advisors to him and asked what should be done then:

‘Here there are many ships sailing from the south, and we have a small though fine force, and I do not want to lead my best friends into danger. Indeed, I would wish to flee, if wise men did not consider it a great disgrace or folly.’

Then Eyvindr answered,⁷⁵

36. It suits not the brave soldier,

Hkr I 184

spear-rain’s Njorðr,⁷⁶ further northwards

ÓTM I 41

to lead the blue land’s stallion;⁷⁷

Landn 66

we allow no hesitation.

⁷⁴ *brynþings fetilstinga*: ‘mailcoat meeting (battle) of the strap-pin (i.e. weapon carried in a harness, perhaps sword)’, battle.

⁷⁵ This verse is found not only in other kings’ sagas, where it is attributed to Eyvindr, but also in the Þórðarbók version of *Landnámabók*, where it is attributed to the Icelder Þorgeirr höggvinkinna, said to be a retainer of King Hákon (*Landn* 66).

⁷⁶ *Njorðr naddregns*: ‘Njorðr (god) of point-rain (battle)’, warrior.

⁷⁷ *blámærar skær*: ‘horse of the blue land (sea)’, ship. All other texts read *borðmærar*.

Now on the roaring roadway
 of Rakni,⁷⁸ a great army—
 with hard grip we hold war-boards⁷⁹—
 Haraldr from the south is driving.

[86] Now they answered each other that each would rather fall across the other than flee before the Danes.

Then the king said, 'Well spoken! Let each take his weapons, and it will make no difference how many Danes there are for each Norwegian.'

After that the king took up his shield and put on his coat of mail and girded himself with Kvernbítr and set a gilded helmet on his head. After that he took his shield and halberd and drew up his troops and treated his retainers and the guests at the feast all the same way, as Eyvindr says in the poem he composed after Hákon's fall, and he composed it in imitation of the one which Gunnhildr had had composed about Eiríkr, in which Óðinn invited him home to Valhöll,⁸⁰ and he tells in the poem of many events from the battle, and this is how it begins:⁸¹

37. Gǫndul and Skǫgul⁸²
 Gautatýr⁸³ sent
 to choose among kings,
 which of Yngvi's race⁸⁴
 was to go with Óðinn
 and to dwell in Valhöll.

Hákonarmál 1
Hkr I 193

38. They found Björn's brother,⁸⁵
 battle-shirt donning,
 the mighty monarch

Hákonarmál 2
Hkr I 186

⁷⁸ *Rakna rymleið*: 'Rakni's (sea-king's) noisy path', sea. *rymleið* is the reading of *Hkr* and other texts: *Fsk* has *runskeið* (B), *rumleið* (A).

⁷⁹ *gunnborð*: 'battle-board', shield.

⁸⁰ See pp. 58–59 above. The statement that *Hákonarmál* was composed in imitation of *Eiríksmál* has been questioned (von See 1963), while Wolf (1969) and Marold (1972) have argued in its support.

⁸¹ The poem is named *Hákonarmál* in *Hkr* I 186, 193.

⁸² *Gǫndul* and *Skǫgul* are listed among names of 'Óðinn's maids' (valkyries) in *Skáldskaparmál* (*Skáldsk* I 115).

⁸³ *Gautatǫr*: Týr (god) of the Gautar, Óðinn.

⁸⁴ See note 10 above.

⁸⁵ I.e. Hákon. Björn kaupmaðr or buna is named among the sons of Haraldr hárfagri on p. 52 above; see also p. 133 below, where the descent of King Óláfr Haraldsson (Saint Óláfr) is traced from him.

[87] had marched with his standard;
 strife-oars⁸⁶ stooped
 and spears quivered;
 then war was under way.

39. He called on Háleygir
 and Holmrygir,
 sole slayer of jarls,
 and advanced to battle.
 Noble, a fine following
 had the frightener of Danes,
 of Norwegian soldiers;
 he stood in a brass helmet.

Hákonarmál 3
Hkr I 186

In this affray Eyvindr skáldaspillir recited a playful rhyme to King Hákon before the armies clashed:⁸⁷

40. Before the long lances
 The land's folk fall; shields tremble.
 With spears the spear-guider⁸⁸ welcomes
 soldiers of Eyvindr skreyja.

Then the king answered,

41. Well do my men repay
 me—we add to that tumult,
 the storm of Hamðir's garments⁸⁹ gathers—
 for gold and inlaid weapons.

[88] From such things it can be seen how fearless the king was, since he considered his fortunes in this way. Gunnhildr's sons now went ashore and drew up their troops, and their army was much the larger. That day the weather was hot with sun, so King Hákon threw off his mailcoat and set his helmet in place and urged his men into the advance laughing, and so cheered his troop with his glad demeanour, according to what Eyvindr says:

42. He threw off his armour;
 the army's chief⁹⁰ his mailcoat

Hákonarmál 4
Hkr I 186

⁸⁶ *dolgárar*: 'oars of enmity (battle)', swords or spears.

⁸⁷ This verse exchange is recorded only in *Fagrskinna*.

⁸⁸ *oddvitir*: 'spear-guider', warrior.

⁸⁹ *Hamðis klæða hríð*: 'storm of Hamðir's (legendary hero's) clothes (armour)', battle.

⁹⁰ *verðungar vísi*: 'leader of the troop of paid men', king.

flung on the field
 before the battle.
 With men he made merry;
 he must defend his country;
 the king with glad spirit
 stood in golden helmet.

CHAPTER 13

After that the battle began and was very fierce. When the storm of missiles was over, King Hákon drew his sword and stood in front under the standard and hewed on either side. He never missed, and the sword cut as if it did miss,⁹¹ as is said here:

43. So the sword pierced
 from the sovereign's hand
 Váfuðr's weeds,⁹² as if
 through water moving;
 [89] spears were clashing,
 shields were smashed.
 Swords resounded
 on skulls of warriors. *Hákonarmál* 5
Hkr I 188
44. Trampled⁹³ were targes
 by the Týr of neck-rings⁹⁴
 with hard limbs of hilts,⁹⁵
 as were heads of Norwegians.
 Clamour came to the islands;
 the kings reddened
 bright banks of shields
 with blood of warriors. *Hákonarmál* 6
Hkr I 188
45. Wound-blazes⁹⁶ burned
 in bloody gashes, *Hákonarmál* 7
Hkr I 194

⁹¹ That is, as easily as if there were no resistance.

⁹² *váðir Váfaðar*: 'garments of Váfuðr (Óðinn)', armour.

⁹³ *trøddusk* from *Hkr*; *Fsk* has *trauðuðu*.

⁹⁴ *bauga Týr*: 'Týr (god) of rings', generous man. This is from *Hkr*, where l. 2 reads *fyr Týs ok bauga*; *Fsk* has *við Týs of valdi*. This could mean 'by the power of Týr', but the man-kenning then lacks a determinant. See *NV* §§1053, 2423; Lie 1982, 325–28.

⁹⁵ *hjalta harðfótr*: 'hard leg of hilts', sword-blade.

⁹⁶ *beneldr*, 'wound-fire', sword.

Langobards⁹⁷ lowered
 over lives of men,
 the wound-sea⁹⁸ resounded
 on the swords' headland,⁹⁹
 the arrows' flow¹⁰⁰ falling
 on the foreshore of Storð.

Eyvindr skreyja began to press forward so strongly in the battle that he was a challenge to the courage of the Norwegians, and he attacked most fiercely where Hákon's standard was, and said:

'Where is the king of the Norwegians? Why does he hide himself, and dare not come forward and show himself? Who can tell me where he is?'

Then King Hákon answered, [90] 'Keep straight on if you want to find the king of the Norwegians.'

Then King Hákon threw his shield aside and grasped the hilt of his sword with both hands and ran forward from under the standards.

Then said Þórálfr Skólmsson: 'Lord, let me go against Eyvindr.'

The king replied, 'I am the one he wanted to find, and so he shall meet me first.'

But when the king got to where Eyvindr was he was striking on both sides, and then the king struck with Kvernbitr, holding it in both hands, into Eyvindr's head, splitting the helmet and the head down to the shoulders. About this, Eyvindr skáldaspillir composed afterwards:

46. The stirrer of the storm of
 slaughter-gate-Gefn,¹⁰¹ loyal
 to troops, not treasure, did not
 tell Skreyja to turn aside,
 'if, with winning in mind,¹⁰² you wish
 the wise warrior¹⁰³ to encounter,

Hkr I 189

⁹⁷ *langbarðar*, 'long-beards', swords from Lombardy in Italy.

⁹⁸ *sárgymir*: 'wound-sea', blood. This is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *sior gymis* (A), *sior gymner* (B).

⁹⁹ *sverða nes*, 'headland of swords', shield.

¹⁰⁰ *flóð fleina*, 'flood of spears or arrows', blood.

¹⁰¹ *valgrinda Gefnar veðrheyjandi*, 'raiser of the storm of Gefn (valkyrie) of the slaughter-gates (shields)', raiser of battle, warrior.

¹⁰² *sigmunnigr*, 'with mind fixed on (your own) victory'.

¹⁰³ *sólsþennir*, probably part of a man-kenning; *sól*- 'sun', *þennir* 'one who grasps'. *Skj* completes the kenning with *Njóts ranna* (with emendation of *njótr*): 'grasper of the

press onwards, ocean-rider,¹⁰⁴
to the able king of the Northmen.’

He composed another verse about the fall of Eyvindr skreyja:

47. I know that the sharp wound-wand,¹⁰⁵ *Hkr* I 190
wielded by the king two-handed, *ÓTM* I 44
cut the dubiously doughty
dweller on the ski of cargo;¹⁰⁶
[91] the branch of boar-of-Óli’s
bad weather,¹⁰⁷ Danes’ harmer,
through hair-barrows¹⁰⁸ drove down
dauntless, his sword gold-hilted.

On one side of King Hákon Þórálfr sterki (the Strong) Skólmsson stood and killed many men with his sword, which was called Fetbreiðr (Broad-tracks?), and which the king had given him, as Þórðr Sjáreksson says:¹⁰⁹

48. There, where strove war-hardened¹¹⁰ *Þórólfs drápa Skólmssonar* 1
wood of land-binder’s horses,¹¹¹ *Hkr* I 187
the host came to swords’ clashing *ÓTM* I 43
keenly, on Storð to Fitjar,
till¹¹² he dared forth who flourished
fire of the storm of ogress

sun (sword) of Njót’s (Óðinn’s) vault (shield)’, warrior (*Skj* B I, 63). *Hkr* has *sokkspennir* ‘one who squanders treasure’, generous man.

¹⁰⁴ *njót hranna* (with emendation of *ranna*): ‘user of the waves’, seafarer.

¹⁰⁵ *benvondr*: ‘wound-wand’, sword.

¹⁰⁶ *byggvingr bulka skiðs*: ‘one who lives on the ski of cargo (ship)’, seafarer.

¹⁰⁷ *Óla galtar eldraugr*: ‘log (man) of storm (battle) of Óli’s boar (helmet)’, warrior. Óli (the form is Áli in *Hkr*) was a legendary king who owned a helmet called Hildisvín or Hildigoltr ‘battle-boar’ (*Skáldsk* I 58); in *Ynglinga saga* Snorri refers to the now lost *Skjöldunga saga* as his source for the story in which Áli appears (*Hkr* I 57).

¹⁰⁸ *skarar haugr*: ‘mound, barrow of hair’, head.

¹⁰⁹ Þórðr Sjáreksson is identified as an Icelander, related to Hjalti Skeggjason, in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* (*ÓTM* II 322–23). He is said to have composed *Róðadrápa* (Rood-poem), an *efidrápa* (memorial poem) for King Óláfr the Saint (*Hkr* II 281). According to *Hkr* (I 187), this verse belongs to a *drápa* which Þórðr composed about Þórálfr, evidently many years after the events related.

¹¹⁰ This follows the reading of *Hkr*: *þøðharðir* ‘battle-hard’, where *Fsk* has *borðharðir*.

¹¹¹ *jóðraugr bands landa*: ‘log (man) of horses (ships) of the binding of lands (sea)’, seafarer.

¹¹² *aðr* (*Fsk*); *Hkr* has *ok*.

of the ship's sheltering moons¹¹³ by the
shoulder of the king of Northmen.

[92] 49. The criminals' killer¹¹⁴—

so calm shall be broken—

far by his front line

fought; long rule men wished him.

The struggle started when the

son, gold's flight not fearing,¹¹⁵

of Gunnhildr came northwards,

but the king had fallen.

Þórólfs drápa Skólmssonar 3

Hkr I 191

ÓTM I 45

50. Weariness was clear, where

wounded farmers sat at

their rigid rowing-shafts;

rendered up life many.

The sword-claimed comforters

of the cuckoo of Muninn's

morsel¹¹⁶ remained with sand-filled

mouths in the depths wave-tossed.

Þórólfs drápa Skólmssonar 4

Hkr I 191–92 (1st half)

ÓTM I 45 (1st half)

[93] 51. Brave it was, when the bold

battle-Njörðr¹¹⁷ in such tumult

fought by the king, who furnished

refreshment for the raven.

Þórólfs drápa Skólmssonar 2

Hkr I 192

ÓTM I 45

In this battle it was not easy for cowardly men to put up resistance, because of the strength and the weapons and the courage, and those of the Danish men who were farthest away seemed to be best placed. But those who were closest soon got tired of it, and soon after the fall of Eyvindr skreyja the troop of the sons of Gunnhildr took to flight and fled to their ships. Many of the men of the sons of Eiríkr fell there, and they themselves fled. And King Hákon's men pursued

¹¹³ *gímslóngvir gífrs hlémána nausta blakks*: 'swinger of fire (sword) of the ogress (axe) of the protecting moons (shields) of the horse of the boat-sheds (ship)', warrior. This exceptionally long extended kenning is not fully rendered in this translation.

¹¹⁴ *varga myrðir*: 'killer of outlaws', just king.

¹¹⁵ *varr ótta á flóttu gulls*: 'lacking fear of the flight of gold', generous; the description may be intended to apply to *gramr* 'king' (l. 7) rather than to *Gunnhildar afi* 'Gunnhildr's son', Haraldr. The fallen king may be Haraldr's brother Gamli.

¹¹⁶ *huggandi munins tuggu gauks*, 'gladdener of the cuckoo of Muninn's (Óðinn's raven) mouthful', feeder of the raven, warrior.

¹¹⁷ *göndlar Njörðr*: 'Njörðr (god) of battle', warrior. This is the reading of *Hkr*; *Fsk* has *gunnar morðr* (B), *gunnar möðr* (A).

them long through the day and killed as many of them as they could. But the king had his warship brought and rowed north along the coast, meaning to go to his estate at Alreksstaðir, because he had been wounded; he had been struck in the arm by an arrow as he pursued those in flight, and he was bleeding so heavily that weakness came over him, and when he came to the place called Hákonarhella—he had been born there—he stayed there overnight and had a tent pitched for him and was carried ashore there.

When King Hákon realised that his wound was life-threatening, he called his counsellors to him and spoke in many ways in the presence of his dear friends about the things which had happened in his lifetime, and then he regretted that he had done much in opposition to God and the laws of Christian men in his actions. [94] Then his friends offered to take his body west to England and bury him there by a church.

The king replied, 'I am not worthy of that, I have lived as heathen men do, so must I be buried as heathens are.'

He showed his repentance with this sign: he regretted the discord with his kinsmen and sent letters to the sons of Gunnhildr,¹¹⁸ and in them he gave his kinsman Haraldr his band of retainers and all his kingdom. After that King Hákon died, and had then reigned over Norway for twenty-six years. He was mourned by friends and enemies, as Eyvindr skáldaspillir says:

52. On a blessed day
will be born that king
who has such a heart.
his age
will always be
given out as good.

Hákonarmál 19
Hkr I 196

53. Without fetter
Fenrisulfr will attack¹¹⁹
the world of men,
before will come
so fine a king
in his empty path.

Hákonarmál 20
Hkr I 197

¹¹⁸ Other texts agree that Hákon sent messages to the sons of Eiríkr (*Hkr* I, 192) or that Haraldr was accepted as king by his advice (*Ágr* 12), but the reference to letters (*bréf*) in *Fsk* is anachronistic.

¹¹⁹ *Fenrisulfr*: The monstrous wolf Fenrir, fettered by the gods, whose breaking loose signals the coming of Ragnarök (the doom of the gods) (*Gylf* 50).

54. Cattle die,
kinsmen die,
land and fief go to ruin;
since Hákon went
to the heathen gods,
many a man is enslaved.

Hákonarmál 21
Hkr I 197

[95] His men carried his body to Sæmr in Lygrisfjorðr in North Hordaland and built a mound over it.¹²⁰ Before Hákon fell, eight of the sons of Haraldr inn hárfagri had been killed in battle, as Eyvindr skáldaspillir says, and he spoke as if the king was coming to Valhøll, because it was the belief of heathen people that all those who died of wounds would go to Valhøll.¹²¹

55. 'Enemy of jarls,
in here you have
eight brothers,' said Bragi.

Hákonarmál 16
Hkr I 196

And when the letters that King Hákon had had sent reached Haraldr Gunnhildarson and his brothers, they were glad to receive this message and made preparations; they travelled north along the coast intending to meet their kinsman King Hákon, but when they reached the north King Hákon was dead.

CHAPTER 14

Then Haraldr was accepted as king. And when Haraldr and his brothers had taken the title of king, King Hákon's band of retainers entered into his service, and soon there was little agreement amongst the retainers, for those who had served Hákon and those who had previously been with the sons of Gunnhildr had had many quarrels between them in the past, and each side thought their own princes better. This is demonstrated in the verbal exchange of these two poets. Glúmr Geirason said this:

¹²⁰ *Sæmr* is given as *Sæheimr* in *Ágr* and *Hkr*; now Seim. A mound there is associated with Hákon and was investigated in 1879, but no trace of a burial has survived (*Hkr* I, 193 n. 1).

¹²¹ The verse does not occur in *Fsk* (B).

- [96] 56. Haraldr has got good vengeance *Hkr* I 198
 for Gamli; sword-wound-logs¹²² *ÓTM* I 47
 forfeit life; king fierce in battle,
 fine deeds you accomplish
 as the war-deity's dark falcons¹²³
 drink Hákon's blood; I saw¹²⁴
 the reed of ruddy gashes¹²⁵
 reddened beyond the water.

When Eyvindr skáldaspillir heard this verse, he spoke another in return:

57. Wary of flight, once the ruler *Hkr* I 181
 washed in blood of Gamli *ÓTM* I 47–48
 Fenrir's lip-stretcher;¹²⁶ fury
 enflamed the weapon-storm staffs,¹²⁷
 when into the sea, steadily,
 the sons of Eiríkr he drove;
 now spears' guarding-Gautar¹²⁸
 grieve for the prince's downfall.

[97] Then King Haraldr replied, very angry, 'You still love King Hákon more; go with him and be his men still.'

Then Eyvindr's friends were fearful for him and expected that the king would have him killed. The friends of both came forward and asked the king for a truce and said that Eyvindr could make amends in the same way as he had offended, and told him to compose another verse in order to buy the king's friendship.

58. Little you let your spirit, *Hkr* I 200
 land-guardian of Hordalanders,¹²⁹ *ÓTM* I 48

¹²² *hjors bendraugr*: 'log (man) of wounds of the sword', warrior. *Bendraugar* is the reading of *Fsk* (B) and some MSS of *Hkr*; *Fsk* (A) and other MSS of *Hkr* have the more correct warrior kenning *hjors berdraugar* 'logs bearing swords'.

¹²³ *dolgbands dökkvalir*: 'dark hawks of the strife-god (Óðinn)', ravens. *dökk-* is the reading of *Hkr*; *Fsk* has *dogg-* (B), *dogg-* (A).

¹²⁴ *sá ek* (*Fsk*; *Hkr* and *ÓTM* have *frá ek* 'I have heard') supports the assertion of *Íslendingadrápa* 11 that Glúmr Geirason fought at Fitjar (*Skj* B I, 541).

¹²⁵ *rauðra benja reyr*: 'the reed of red wounds', sword.

¹²⁶ *Fenris varra sparr*: 'stretcher of Fenrir's lips', sword. *Gylfaginning* relates how the gods bind the wolf Fenrir and wedge his jaws apart with a sword (*Gylf* 29).

¹²⁷ *malmhríðar meiðr*: 'staff, pole (man) of the storm of weapons (battle)', warrior.

¹²⁸ *geira gæti-Gautr*: 'guarding-Óðinn of spears', warrior.

¹²⁹ *landvörðr Hqrða*: 'guardian of the land of the people of Hordaland', and by extension, of the Norwegians; king of Norway.

weaken, they said, when wound-hail¹³⁰ *Skáldsk* I 71 (1st half)
 washed on armour; bows were bent;
 when unsheathed, sharp-bladed,
 shrieked from your hand, Haraldr,
 ice of the sword-strap,¹³¹ so that
 sated was the she-wolf.

The king answered, 'Little, and yet something.'

Then Glúmr Geirason said, 'That which is nothing is indeed little, lord.'

Then the king answered, 'That man will never be true to us as long as [98] he lives.'

Then Glúmr told Eyvindr to compose another verse on King Haraldr. Then he spoke this, going before the king:

59. Before you I have followed, fine prince, one master— old age, king, comes upon me— I crave not a third one. I was true to the dear ruler, two shields never juggled; I fall in, lord, with your following; falls old age upon me,	<i>Hkr</i> I 202 <i>ÓTM</i> I 49–50
--	--

'before I lost Hákon.'

After that Eyvindr stayed with the sons of Gunnhildr for a little while; then he went to his estates, and most of Hákon's men did the same; they served the sons of Eiríkr for a short time and settled down back on their estates.

The sons of Gunnhildr are said to have received baptism in England in their youth, and when they came into the country and had all taken the title of king, they demolished temples and abolished sacrifice, but did not compel anyone to Christianity, and nothing is said about their observance of the faith other than that he who wished was Christian and he who wished was heathen. The brothers, sons of Gunnhildr, had many groups of followers, and some travelled inland through the country and some along the coast, and they caused great famine in those times, because herring fishing and all kinds of sea

¹³⁰ *benja hagl*: 'hail of wounds', arrows.

¹³¹ *fetla swell*: 'ice of the sword-harness', sword (here plural).

catch ceased, and the grain was spoiled. The country people attributed it to the anger of their gods and the fact that the kings had had their sacrificial sites destroyed. Eyvindr skáldaspillir said this:¹³²

60. Snow falls at midsummer Hkr I 221
 on Svǫlnir's mistress;¹³³
 we have bound the bud's gnawing
 beast¹³⁴ indoors, as Lapps do.

[99] From things like this it can be observed what heavy times those were, when there was so much snow in the middle of summer that all the farm animals were kept inside for feeding. Eiríkr's sons exposed the people of the country to their ambition and took no heed of the laws of the land. It was also claimed that they hoarded their wealth in the ground like petty householders and would not pay their men, as Eyvindr skáldaspillir said:

61. We, Ullr of the war-leek,¹³⁵ Hkr I 201
 wore seed of Fýrisvellir¹³⁶ Skáldsk I 59 (1st half)
 on hawks' hills¹³⁷ through all of ÓTM I 49
 Hákon's lifetime;
 now the people's foe¹³⁸ the flour
 of Fróði's sad slave-girls¹³⁹
 has hid in flesh of the mother
 of the harmer of the giantess.¹⁴⁰

¹³² For interpretations of this verse, see E. O. G. Turville-Petre 1976, 44 and *NV* §3049.

¹³³ *Svǫlnis vára*: 'mistress of Svǫlnir (Óðinn)', the goddess Jörð, i.e. the earth.

¹³⁴ *brums birkihind*: 'barking-animal of the bud', domestic animal which strips bark or leaves off plants.

¹³⁵ *ímunlauks Ullr*: 'Ullr (god) of the battle-leek (sword)', warrior.

¹³⁶ *Fýrisvalla fræ*: 'seed of Fýrisvellir', gold. The legendary king Hrólfr kraki is said to have scattered gold on the field of Fýrisvellir to delay the pursuing Swedes (*Skáldsk* I 59).

¹³⁷ *hauka fjöll*: 'hawks' mountains', arms (on which trained hawks perch).

¹³⁸ *folkstríðir*: 'tormentor of people'.

¹³⁹ *Fróða fágþýjaðra þýja meldr*: 'flour of the joyless bondwomen of Fróði', gold. *Grottasngur* relates how Fróði, a legendary king of the Danes, made his giantess slaves grind gold from the magic mill Grotti (*Skáldsk* I 52–57).

¹⁴⁰ *móður mellu dolgs hold*: 'flesh of the mother of the enemy of the giantess', flesh of Þórr's mother, the goddess Jörð, i.e. the earth. This kind of verbal transference is ironically called *ofþjóst* 'excessively clear' (*Skáldsk* I 109).

62. The fading sun of the field *Hkr* I 201
 of Fyllr's eyebrows¹⁴¹ shone on *ÓTM* I 49
 hills of the hull of Ullr¹⁴² *Skáldsk* I 43 (1st half)
 in Hákon's time, for poets;
 [100] now is the stream's elf-circle¹⁴³ *Skáldsk* I 35 (2nd half)
 concealed—great the counsels
 of mighty men—in the body
 of the mother of the foe of giants.¹⁴⁴

For this King Haraldr charged Eyvindr with an offence punishable by death. Then Eyvindr's friends intervened and asked the king to accept atonement from him for that. The king stipulated that Eyvindr must give him the gold ring called Moldi which weighed twelve ounces, and what the king wanted had to be. Then Eyvindr said this:

63. Steerer of skerry's country's *Hkr* I 202
 ski,¹⁴⁵ since that time I ought to *ÓTM* I 50
 find favour in your
 fair wind of the giant's lady,¹⁴⁶
 for I was forced, chooser
 of the field of slaughter,¹⁴⁷
 to give you the ling-chain's litter¹⁴⁸
 long owned by my father.

¹⁴¹ *Fyllar bráa vallar fallsól*: 'setting sun of the field of Fyllr's eyebrows', sun of the forehead, (gold) headband. *Fyllr* is presumably a form of *Fulla* (the form *Fyllar* appears in some MSS), a goddess whose headband is said to have been of gold (*Skáldsk* I 43).

¹⁴² *Ullar kjóls fjall*: 'mountain of Ullr's (a god's) ship (shield)': the arm, on which the shield rests.

¹⁴³ *elfar alfrjóðull*: 'elf-wheel (sun) of the river', gold (the famous Niflungar treasure was hidden in the Rhine river, so gold is often called fire or sun of the sea or river).

¹⁴⁴ *jötma dolgs móður lík*: 'body of the mother of the giants' enemy (Þórr)', the body of the goddess Jörð, i.e. the earth.

¹⁴⁵ *skerja foldar skidrennandi*: 'one who causes to move the ski, long piece of wood of the ground (sea) of the skerry', mover of the ship, seafarer.

¹⁴⁶ *Púrsa tóls býrr*: 'fair wind of the wife (?) of the giant', mind. The word *tóls* is unknown; *Fsk* (A) has *kaus*, *Hkr* has *tos* or *týs*. The sense can be deduced because kennings of the type 'wind of the giantess', meaning 'mind, thought', are common, although their basis in mythology is not understood.

¹⁴⁷ *valjarðar veljandi*: 'one choosing the ground of slaughter', warrior.

¹⁴⁸ *lyngva mens látr*: 'litter (on which animals lie) of the necklace of heather', bed of the serpent, gold (on which dragons were said to lie).

[101] The sons of Eiríkr killed Sigurðr jarl of Hlaðir inland at Qgló, as Eyvindr skáldaspillir says:¹⁴⁹

64. And from Sigurðr,
 who to the swan of
 the god of cargoes¹⁵⁰
 gave the beer of
 the birds of slain
 Haddingjar,¹⁵¹ land-rulers
 took away life
 at Qgló.
- Háleygjatal* 11
Hkr I 207
ÓTM I 54n.
Skáldsk I 7
Skáldsk I 78 (2nd half)
65. And, fearless,
 the fore-arm snake's
 master¹⁵² was
 in mackerel of land¹⁵³
 of life deprived,
 when land-rulers
 betrayed the trust
 of Týr's kinsman.¹⁵⁴
- Háleygjatal* 12
Hkr I 208
ÓTM I 54n.

[102] Eiríkr's sons also killed Tryggvi Ólafsson and many other kings and jarls and other men of power, as Glúmr Geirason says in the *Gráfeldardrápa* (Grey-Cloak Lay) which he composed about King Haraldr:¹⁵⁵

66. Strife of the Sága
 of swords¹⁵⁶ Norway's ruler
- Gráfeldardrápa* 6

¹⁴⁹ The following two verses are said in *Hkr* to belong to *Háleygjatal* (see p. 47, note 16 above).

¹⁵⁰ *svanr Farnatýs*: 'the swan of Farnatýr (the cargo-god, Óðinn)', the raven.

¹⁵¹ *Haddingja vals hróka bjór*: 'beer of the shag (bird) of the slain of the Haddingjar (legendary heroes)', beer of the raven, blood. This interpretation assumes that *vals* derives from *valr* m. 'the slain', but it could also be (from *val* n.) 'the flower, pick' of the Haddingjar.

¹⁵² *alnar orms qðlingr*: 'ruler (lit. nobleman) of the snake of the forearm (ring), wealthy, generous man.

¹⁵³ *jarðar qlunnr*: 'mackerel of land', snake. A word for snake is *lunnr*, which also means fire; by *qffjóst*, this is the sense of the kenning here.

¹⁵⁴ *Týs qttungr*: 'relative of Týr (god)', member of (divinely descended) Ynglingr family.

¹⁵⁵ Thirteen full or half verses and a two-line *stef* (refrain) are attributed to this poem, which is also named in *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* I 162, 238, 243). This verse is found only in *Fagrskinna*.

¹⁵⁶ *rífunga Sögu bágr*: 'strife of Sága (goddess) of swords', strife of the valkyrie, battle.

waged with great mail-wearers,¹⁵⁷
 was a feeder of spear-shower;¹⁵⁸
 the wolf-sater,¹⁵⁹ irresistible,¹⁶⁰
 sent many slaughter-boar
 thorns,¹⁶¹ high-born as he, falling,
 held sway over princes.¹⁶²

King Haraldr was the bravest of the brothers, a great warrior and a man of many kinds of attainments, and he was the leader of the brothers after Gamli fell. Guðþormr had fallen before Haraldr and Hákon fought at Fiṭjar; he died in the Baltic regions. It is said that Sigurðr slefa, King Haraldr's brother, was killed by the *hersir* Klyppr, nephew of Þorleifr spaki and son of Þórðr, Hǫrða-Kári's son, and the reason was that [103] Sigurðr had forcibly abducted Klyppr's wife. Klyppr ran Sigurðr through with a sword. But he was avenged by a retainer of his who was called Sigurðr inn gamli (the Old).¹⁶³

King Haraldr gráfeldr (Grey-cloak) was constantly at sea on ships with his army in various lands, and fought many battles, and usually had the better part. He went south to Denmark with his troops and fought there off Skáni and was victorious against Vikings. A second time he went west, raiding in Scotland and in Ireland, and was successful in both. The third summer he went east with an army to Gautland and fought a great war there. The fourth summer he went north with his army to Bjarmaland, and there fought a great battle on Vinubakki and killed many people there, and got there both gold and silver as well as many other valuable goods, and returned the same autumn. He was very active in his kingdom, little to the benefit of the people of the country. His own men loved him greatly, and he was generous to them, harsh though he might be to the *bændr*. This time was the harshest there has been in Norway,

¹⁵⁷ *brynju njótr*: 'user of the mailcoat', warrior.

¹⁵⁸ *naddskúrar nærir*: 'nourisher, encourager of the rain-shower of spikes (battle)', warrior.

¹⁵⁹ *vargfæðandi*: 'wolf-feeding one', warrior.

¹⁶⁰ *ofvæginn*: emendation of *ofvægum* (B), *uægum* (A).

¹⁶¹ *valgaltar þorn*: 'thorn-tree of the slaughter-boar (helmet surmounted or engraved with boar-images)', warrior.

¹⁶² *jefra*: emendation of MSS *jefri*.

¹⁶³ These events are referred to in *Historia Norvegiae* (HN 2003, 84–87) where the king who is killed is Gunrodus (Gunnrøðr) and the avenger is called Erlingus Senex (Erlingr gamli, *Hkr* I 219, *Ágr* 13). The story is also related in *Sigurðar þáttur slefu* (*Flateyjarbók* I 19–21).

and worst because the oppression of heathen men accomplished little good, and was heavy on those themselves who suffered it.

CHAPTER 15

King Haraldr hárfagri's daughter was Álof árbót (Season's-bettering), who was married to Þórir þegjandi (the Silent), jarl in Mœrr. Their daughter was Bergljót, who was married to Sigurðr Hlaðajarl. Their son was Hákon, who lost his father when he was young, and when he heard of his father's fall he got himself a ship and manned it and equipped his troop well with weapons, and he headed his ship east into Vík and from there into the Baltic. There he began raiding and became a pirate.

He raided around Sweden and among the Gautar, Wends and Kúrir, all the way east around Sýsla; he had asylum in Denmark in the winters, and made friends with King Haraldr [104] Gormsson by means of valuable gifts and visits, and every summer he spent on raids. Hákon was a very good-looking man, and more courtly than most other men; he was of medium height. He had luxuriant hair and beard, was a man of abilities of many kinds, well-spoken, deep, patient, cruel to his enemies both in overt schemes and in secret stratagems, with a long memory for grievances, generous with money.

One autumn it came about for the king of the Danes that his brother's son, who was called Haraldr, came to him; he was the son of Knútr Danaást (Beloved of the Danes), son of Gormr. He came from raiding as a Viking with an abundance of wealth, and because of that he was called Gull-(Gold)-Haraldr. That winter he and Hákon both stayed with the king of the Danes. Hákon became dangerously ill and lay sick long into the winter. His illness was of such a kind that he partook little of food and drink and slept little. He had no severe pain. He also wanted to be alone, or with only a few men, those who had served him for a long time. So it went on until people began to say that he must be deranged or witless. The king came to see him, and they exchanged little speech, for Hákon had little to say. Gull-Haraldr also came to see him because of his cleverness and deep counsel, since everyone said that he would have been an extremely wise man if he had been in health. He began to speak to him of his problem: the fact that he was a king's son and thought

his claim to power was no worse than that of King Haraldr, his father's brother.

And when Hákon heard what he said, he answered and said he was just as well fitted to benefit from his paternity as King Haraldr, and said that if Knútr had lived, Gormr and all the Danes would have wanted him to be king and not Haraldr, 'and now his son is treated as a Viking, but if [105] it were put before the Danes again they would choose to have Knútr's son as king.'

No other course would do now for Haraldr than to demand lands and power from the king, his father's brother, and he discussed the matter with his kinsman according to Hákon's advice, first wanting to know if that could happen by consent. Few men were present at this discussion. The king received coldly the idea of sharing power or land with him; their meeting ended with both being enraged. Next it was heard that Hákon was getting better. Then the king came to see Hákon and put before him the demand that had been made of him and asked for advice as to what answer he must give in this matter. Hákon answered distressfully and sorrowfully, and said that he regretted the situation, and that he would consider it unfortunate if the king's power must decline while he was with him. And yet he said that Gull-Haraldr was entitled to it and had a just claim.

'Give me good advice,' said the king, 'for I see that you are well-disposed to me and you seem not to be happy with our problem.'

Hákon said, 'Give me time, lord, to think over such a difficult case,' and with that they parted. After this it was possible to get speech with Hákon about those points which seemed most important.

Gull-Haraldr came to see Hákon again and pleaded his case, that his father was dead, while he himself was without power and his uncle enraged, and asked for good advice. Hákon answered him and said he had discussed his case with the king and said that he had no confidence that anything would be got from the king, and he put another idea to him to console him, saying that he would be king if he was willing to follow his advice, and said that it was most likely to go amiss if it was not done with boldness and tenacity and resolution. Then Haraldr felt sure that Hákon thought it advisable for him not to abandon his claim, and he said that resolution would not be lacking if he could get the opportunity.

[106] But some time later the king of the Danes himself came to Hákon to find out whether he had considered his case at all. Hákon

said in reply that he had lain awake both night and day and had often been troubled in mind about it.

'I have,' said Hákon, 'discussed it with wise men and good friends of yours; everyone considers your problem the greater, lord, the more often it is discussed. Gull-Haraldr, your kinsman, will be tenacious in his claim if you deny him justice, and to us, your dear friends, one thing is the most distressing. Your father Gormr was such a great man in his family that he took over the realms of many kings. Now you will have to divide that into two parts. Who will be able to find a way for you to keep your glory intact, your lands and power, and yet for your kinsman Gull-Haraldr to receive the answer which he must receive according to law and justice?'

Then the king replied very anxiously, 'You have said a great deal, Hákon; how is it possible for me to share the Danish kingdom half-and-half with Haraldr and yet keep it all alone?'

Hákon replied, 'Who would expect a great return for little labour? It would be work worthy of a king to keep his kingdom, Denmark, for himself, but to make his kinsman such a great man that he has another, and no lesser, realm. That is what your father Gormr would have done, not be diminished by his noble kinsmen, but rather increase their power by seizing a kingdom where it was available.'

The king answered, 'You are right, Hákon, that would indeed be a deed worthy of a king, but where is there now a kingdom free or available?'

Hákon replied, 'The kingdom of Norway is available to all the people of the land, and the people of Norway are very unfortunate in their kings, so much so that they deserve to die for their crimes and evil deeds.'

The king replied, 'Eiríkr's sons are bold and victorious fighters, and Norway is difficult to attack in war.'

Hákon replied, 'Haraldr will not have any fears about coming to Denmark if you send word to him, lord, and then Gull-Haraldr can kill [107] him.'

The king answered, 'If King Haraldr were killed, the reign of the sons of Gunnhildr would be over,' and then he went away and was in high spirits.

Soon after this Hákon got up and said that he was restored to health. Now agreement was reached in the talks of the kinsmen King Haraldr Gormsson and Gull-Haraldr, and they had discussions together

for many days, and Hákon was with them, and no one but they alone knew what was being planned.

CHAPTER 16

King Haraldr Gormsson sent men with a fully-manned ship to Norway to see his foster-son King Haraldr, with the message that the king of the Danes had heard news of oppression and famine from Norway, and also that it was expensive for the king to maintain his retainers because the *bændr* could not pay their rents because of lack of money, and invited his foster-son Haraldr to come to Denmark, offering him the whole of Jótland as winter quarters and to travel through for feasts with two *hundred* (240) men. This offer Haraldr placed before his counsellors, and it seemed advisable to him to accept so great a benefit from his foster-father, but some said that it must be a trick. But the landholders and all the common people urged him to it strongly, said it was an excellent idea, and that it would not befit a king to be afraid to make friends with such a ruler as the king of the Danes. And because Haraldr was not reflective, and thought he had done no harm to the king of Denmark that had not been forced on him by necessity, Haraldr went to Denmark with three *longships*, eighty men on each ship. He came south to Limafjörðr and stopped at the place called Háls. Gull-Haraldr had nine ships ready to go raiding, and he went with the whole of this troop to meet Haraldr Eiríksson. Then King Haraldr found [108] that he had been betrayed by Hákon's scheme and Haraldr Gormsson's arrangements and Gull-Haraldr's prowess. He called to his men and told them to draw their swords boldly and defend themselves; then he drew his own sword and stood out in front of the standards, as Glúmr Geirason says:

67. Valiant words spoke the Óðinn
 of valuable hilts' metal,¹⁶⁴
 who had courage to colour
 crimson the plain for people;

Gráfeldardrápa 7
Hkr I 238
ÓTM I 95

¹⁶⁴ *mætra hjalta malm-Óðinn*: 'Óðinn (god) of metal of precious hilts', god of the sword-blade, warrior.

wide-landed Haraldr warned
warriors their swords to wield
in battle; to seafarers,¹⁶⁵ splendid
seemed the king's command.

68. The land-defender,¹⁶⁶ who fiercely
fended off attackers,
then made whine the clanging, whetstone-
whittled fire of the mailcoat.¹⁶⁷
- Gráfeldardrápa* 8
Skáldsk I 70

After that a fierce battle began, and Haraldr and his men put up a strong resistance, but it was not long before Gull-Haraldr overwhelmed [109] them, and there fell King Haraldr Gunnhildarson with most of his troops, although first he inflicted great damage on the Danes by slaughter of men. This was a land battle, as it says here:¹⁶⁸

69. On both sides hewed bushes
of blades of swords¹⁶⁹ each other;
that host of spears¹⁷⁰ Haraldr
had to advance against.
On the sand the sender
of sea's fire¹⁷¹ fell at Háls;
the crafty confidant
of kings¹⁷² caused that killing.
- Gráfeldardrápa* 10

Hkr I 239 (2nd half)
ÓTM I 95 (2nd half)

Elsewhere King Haraldr of the Danes and Hákon Sigurðarson were conferring. Then Hákon had equipped his ships for raiding as he usually did, and then he said to King Haraldr:

‘Lord, how do you expect it will go with your kinsman Gull-Haraldr? Will our kinsman Haraldr be killed or not? He is certainly a fine man, very courageous and a great friend to you, and he could not have expected such a trick from you.’

Then the king of the Danes replied, ‘That is true, it is indeed an evil deed to kill the foster-son I took on my knee.’

¹⁶⁵ *flotnum* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *flóttu*.

¹⁶⁶ *foldar vörðr*: ‘defender of land’, king.

¹⁶⁷ *brynju hrynjeldr*: ‘resounding fire of the mail-coat’, sword.

¹⁶⁸ The first half of this verse does not appear elsewhere.

¹⁶⁹ *mækis eggja heggr*: ‘tree of sword’s blades’, warrior.

¹⁷⁰ *geirdrótt*: ‘spear-troop’, army.

¹⁷¹ *sævar báls sendir*: ‘sender of sea’s fire (gold)’, generous lord.

¹⁷² *jofra spjalli*: ‘confidant of kings’; *konungs spjalli* is specified by Snorri as an epithet for a jarl (*Skáldsk* I 81), here Hákon.

Then said Hákon, 'How true to you, lord, do you expect Gull-Haraldr to be, if he establishes himself on the throne of Norway and takes [110] the title of king there? It may be that we are rowing in the *levy* and still paying the fine¹⁷³ with our plans; but I can see a further scheme for bringing the realm of Norway under your rule. Your father Gormr acquired a great deal of territory which his father had not had. What territory will you take, lord, that is as big as or bigger than Denmark, which your father brought under his rule? It would be a deed fit for a king to take power in Norway now and avenge one's foster-son.'

The king answered, 'It will do me no credit to kill my brother's son.'

Hákon replied, 'I can reward you for the asylum, lord, and the good treatment and fine gifts you have given me, by subjecting the whole of Norway to you in one day, if you then give the country into my power and take from it such tribute as we shall settle upon, and I would become your man.'

That plan pleased the king of the Danes well, and now they made a firm agreement between them.

Then Hákon went with the fifteen ships he was accustomed to take raiding to meet Gull-Haraldr, and they met soon after Haraldr Eiríksson had fallen. Hákon at once attacked Gull-Haraldr, and a fierce battle took place there, and Gull-Haraldr and most of his troop fell there, but some escaped in flight. Hákon seized all the gold that Gull-Haraldr had owned and won abroad, and that was so much that there was no other example of one man owning so much in the northern lands. After that Hákon went to see the king of the Danes and came to an amicable settlement with him over the killing of his kinsman.

That same summer Haraldr Gormsson went to Norway with the whole Danish army, and Gunnhildr and her sons fled before him out of the country and west to Scotland. Then Haraldr Gormsson took power in the whole kingdom of Norway, and he established Hákon in authority over the land as far east as Líðendisnes and gave him the title of jarl and told him to accept feasts and administer the laws of the land and pay tribute from it to the king of the Danes.

¹⁷³ *að róa leiðangrinn ok gjalda víti*: a metaphorical, perhaps proverbial expression: the *víti* was a fine paid in lieu of the *leiðangr* 'levy', a contribution of men and equipment required by the king.

After that Haraldr Gormsson went to Denmark, [111] and he and Hákon parted good friends. Then Jarl Hákon had avenged his wrongs, for it was through his schemes that Haraldr Eiríksson was killed, as Einarr skálaglamm (‘Tinkling-scales?’)¹⁷⁴ said:

70. Before avenging his father Vellekla 13
 the furious stave of sword-storm¹⁷⁵
 turned not back; the host’s protector¹⁷⁶
 took life from the king of Hǫrðar;¹⁷⁷
 there was never, nor will be
 a war-ski Freyr¹⁷⁸ who so far—
 at that men marvel—
 promoted a jarl’s power.

Hákon was powerful and began to perform sacrifices more aggressively than before. Then the seasons rapidly became more propitious, grain and herring became plentiful again, the earth blossomed, as Einarr says.¹⁷⁹

71. And, useful to men, the Æsir’s Vellekla 16
 offspring¹⁸⁰ return to rituals; Hkr I 242
 the mighty master of Hlökk’s
 meeting’s red board¹⁸¹ wins glory.
 [112] Now the earth is growing
 again; the wealth-destroyer¹⁸²

¹⁷⁴ Einarr Helgason skálaglamm was an Icelander, mentioned in *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, where he is said to discuss poetry with the hero. According to *Egils saga* Einarr was given a shield by Jarl Hákon in payment for the poem *Vellekla*, to which the following verse and several others cited in *Fsk* are believed to belong. The poem’s name means ‘Gold-Dearth’, presumably referring to the poet’s hope of reward for its composition. The meaning of the nickname is obscure, and was evidently so in medieval times, since *Jómsvíkinga saga* gives a story evidently designed to explain it: Jarl Hákon gave Einarr a set of scales that tinkled and foretold the future (*Jóms* (291), 179).

¹⁷⁵ *hjørvedrs óðstafr*: ‘fury-staff of sword-storm (battle)’, warrior. *óðstafr* is emended from *odda starf* (B), *ostafr* (A).

¹⁷⁶ *hervörðuðr*: ‘guardian of the army’, war leader.

¹⁷⁷ *Hørða konungr*: ‘king of the Hordalanders’, i.e. king of Norway.

¹⁷⁸ *folkskiðs Freyr*: ‘Freyr (god) of the war-ski (sword)’, warrior.

¹⁷⁹ For a slightly different interpretation of the verse, see E. O. G. Turville-Petre 1976, 61–62.

¹⁸⁰ *ásmegir*: sons of the Æsir, i.e. the gods.

¹⁸¹ *Hlakkar móts rauðbrikar rækir*: ‘tender of the red board of Hlökk’s (valkyrie’s) meeting (battle)’, tender of the shield, warrior.

¹⁸² *auðrýrir*: ‘destroyer of wealth’, generous lord.

lets happy spear-bridge envoys¹⁸³
inhabit the gods' temples.

Then there was good peace with this fruitfulness, as Einarr goes on to say:

72. In the world there was never *Vellekla* 18
a well-born guarding-Njorðr
of the spear-board¹⁸⁴ who spread
such peace, except Fróði.¹⁸⁵

In another *drápa*¹⁸⁶ Einarr speaks in this fashion:

73. Gamli's kin¹⁸⁷ once the country *Drápa on Jarl Hákon* 1
kept—on that the word of
trees of war-panes¹⁸⁸ touches—
temples they dared damage.
Best of all lords, the battle-
bold Ullr of spears' causeway¹⁸⁹
now in the seat is settled
of the stalwart princes.

[113] From this it can be heard that the sons of Eiríkr destroyed the rituals, but Hákon re-established them. When Hákon had ruled over Norway for one year Ragnfróðr Eiríksson came and demanded power in Norway. Hákon opposed him with an army, and they fought, as Einarr says:

74. A second time southwards *Vellekla* 19
steeds of planks¹⁹⁰ the jarl galloped;
the swords' song keeper¹⁹¹
sought battle with Ragnfróðr.

¹⁸³ *geirbríar órr*: 'messenger, servant of the spear-bridge (shield)', warrior.

¹⁸⁴ *geirbríkar geti-Njorðr*: 'guarding-Njorðr (god) of the spear-panel (shield)', warrior.

¹⁸⁵ *Fróði*: legendary king of the Danes.

¹⁸⁶ This *drápa* is not referred to elsewhere, and it is not known whether any other surviving verses belong to it.

¹⁸⁷ *Gamla kind*: family (i.e. brothers) of Gamli, the sons of Eiríkr.

¹⁸⁸ *gunnborðs lundr*: 'tree of the war-board (shield)', warrior, man.

¹⁸⁹ *geirvaðils Ullr*: 'Ullr (god) of the spear-ford', god of the land of the spear (shield), warrior.

¹⁹⁰ *borðmarr*: 'board-horse', ship (made of planks).

¹⁹¹ *sngherðir sverða*: 'keeper of the song of swords', controller of battle, warrior.

Hákon had a bigger army and smaller ships, and for that reason he fell back onto land, went ashore from the ships and challenged Ragnfrøðr to fight him on land, but he did not want to, being afraid of the army on land, as Einarr says:

75. For land made the mast-animal¹⁹² *Vellekla* 20
 carrying the crusher
 of Þundr's fire¹⁹³—that finished
 the sea fight—many wounds sounded,
 nor would Yggr's open-handed
 heir,¹⁹⁴ tested in battle,
 be first to beg for quarter—
 bowed not the jarl to the king.

- [114] 76. If war¹⁹⁵ the king wanted *Vellekla* 21
 to wage, the cause of men's dying¹⁹⁶
 to defend the field was ready—
 the force fell round the ruler.

With that they parted, and Ragnfrøðr stayed over the winter in Sogn, while Hákon was in Þrándheimr. The following spring Hákon called out a full *levy* from throughout Þrándheimr and Hálogaland and all the districts north of Staðr, and he gathered an enormous following. It is said that seven noblemen accompanied him, as Einarr says:¹⁹⁷

77. Further, the defender *Vellekla* 22
 of the folk of Mœrr, eager *Hkr* I 245
 for war, sent men southwards *ÓTM* I 101–02
 to Sogn travelling;
 from four districts the Freyr
 of the fair wind of Heðinn¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² *vandar dýr*: 'beast of the mast', ship.

¹⁹³ *kneytir Þundar hyrjar*: 'crusher of the fire of Þundr (Óðinn)', destroyer of the sword, warrior.

¹⁹⁴ *Yggs niðr*: 'descendant of Yggr (Óðinn)', member of the Ynglingr family, i.e. Jarl Hákon.

¹⁹⁵ *valmey*: 'slaughter-maid', valkyrie, i.e. war (through *offjóstr* on the valkyrie name Hildr, which is also the common noun *hildr* 'war').

¹⁹⁶ *valdr haulda morðs*: 'controller of the death of men', warrior.

¹⁹⁷ *Heimskringla* cites verses 77, 78 (of which a second half is also preserved), 79 and 80, introduced with the words *svá segir í Velleklu* 'as it says in *Vellekla*'.

¹⁹⁸ *Freyr Heðins byrjar*: 'Freyr (god) of the fair wind of Heðinn (legendary warrior)', god of battle, warrior.

brought out all people;
the Ullr of swords¹⁹⁹ was resolute.

- [115] 78. And seven land-steerers²⁰⁰
on smooth hurdles of Meiti²⁰¹
swept with the bird-of-Sqrvi's
soother²⁰² to the shield-meeting.²⁰³

Vellekla 23
Hkr I 245
ÓTM I 102

They caught up with the sons of Gunnhildr inland in Sogn and fought against them, and Hákon won the battle and killed three *hundred* (360) men of the sons of Eiríkr, as is said here:

79. Fierce was the fight until the
enforcing pole of war-trees²⁰⁴
crammed under the corpse-vulture's²⁰⁵
claws three *hundred* enemies;
to the sea on soldiers'
skulls—so great his gain—
the war-waging leader
could walk, laden with booty.

Vellekla 25
Hkr I 247
ÓTM I 103

[116] So many men were killed that it says in this verse that the jarl walked away from this encounter treading on men's heads. After this battle the sons of Gunnhildr, and she with them, fled west over the sea to Scotland, and after that Hákon ruled Norway as the king of the Danes had appointed him to do, and there was great friendship between them.

¹⁹⁹ *sverða Ullr*: 'Ullr (god) of swords', warrior.

²⁰⁰ *landreki* 'land-director', ruler. Snorri derives it from *reka* 'to drive': *Því heitir hann svá at hann rekr her um land annara konunga eða rekr her ór sínu landi* 'He is called this because he drives armies through the lands of other kings or drives armies out of his own land' (*Skáldsk* I 101), but it is more probably related to *rekja* 'to straighten'.

²⁰¹ *myúkhurðr Meita*: 'supple hurdle of Meiti (sea-king)', ship.

²⁰² *svørgælir Sqrva*: 'comforter of Sqrvi's (sea-king's, warrior's) bird', feeder of the raven, warrior. This is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *svørgælir aurgua* (B), *saurgoli sarpa* (A).

²⁰³ *randa mót*: meeting of shields. *randa* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *høndum*.

²⁰⁴ *þrøngvimeidr gunnar lunda*: 'oppressing-pole of trees of battle', victorious war-leader.

²⁰⁵ *gammr nás*: 'vulture of carrion', raven.

CHAPTER 17

In the thirteenth year of the reign of Jarl Hákon there came a summons from Denmark for the jarl to go with an army to give help and support to King Haraldr Gormsson against the emperor Ótti.²⁰⁶ Jarl Hákon called out a half *levy* of men from the whole of his kingdom and went to meet King Haraldr in response to his summons. And when he came to Denmark, the king sent Hákon with a large force south to the Danavirki,²⁰⁷ and he was the commander of the army, but the king himself was to guard the land against a naval force. The emperor Ótti came against commander Hákon with an army of Saxons, Franks, Frisians and Wends; there was a hard battle there. It ended with the flight of the emperor and all his army, as it says here:

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------------------------------------|
| 80. | Din of Þriði's fire ²⁰⁸ thundered
there as spear-play Miðjungar ²⁰⁹
engaged shields together;
to grips came the eagle-feeder; ²¹⁰
[117] the sea-steed's striking-Þrótr ²¹¹
sent Saxons fleeing; that was
where the king with warriors
the wall ²¹² for men defended. | Vellekla 29
Hkr I 258
ÓTM I 137 |
|-----|--|---------------------------------------|

On this expedition the emperor Ótti was involved in many great events before he was able to defeat and vanquish the king of the Danes. He went as far north in Denmark as the place called Mársey in Limafjörðr. There he met King Haraldr of the Danes with his

²⁰⁶ Emperor Otto II of Germany, who in 972–73 broke through the Danish defences and advanced some distance into Jutland.

²⁰⁷ *Danavirki* 'Danish wall'. The Danevirke was a fortification of banks and ditches across the base of the Jutland peninsula to secure the Danish boundary against the Germans. Its construction was begun before 700 and it was re-fortified in later periods.

²⁰⁸ *þrymr Þriðja logs*: 'din of Þriði's (Óðinn's) fire', din of the sword, battle.

²⁰⁹ *leikniðjungir odda*: 'Miðjungir (giant) of the play of spears', giant of battle, warrior. Miðjungir is listed as a giant name in one of the *þulur* attached to *Snorra Edda* (*Skáldsk* I 111), but it is not known how it comes to be used as a base word in kennings for 'man'.

²¹⁰ *arngreddir*: 'eagle-feeder', warrior.

²¹¹ *sæki-Þrótr sundfaxa*: 'attacking-Þrótr (Óðinn) of the sea-horse', Viking, sea-fighter.

²¹² *garðr*: 'enclosure, wall, stronghold', here the Danevirke.

army—and he had fled from the emperor earlier when he had broken the Danavirki before, as can be heard in the account²¹³ of how with great force it was overcome, thanks to God's help.

Then the emperor Ótti invited King Haraldr to accept the true faith, but he refused, and said that it was proper for him to keep the same religion as his forefathers. The emperor had the gospel preached to him and had him told many great wonders about God, and it reached the point at last where the king of the Danes asked to be shown some sign that the religion offered by the emperor was better than that which the Danes already had. Then Bishop Poppó²¹⁴ came forward and carried red-hot iron in his hand and showed the king of the Danes his unburned hand.²¹⁵ At the sight of this miracle the king of the Danes accepted baptism and the true faith, together with all his army.

After that King Haraldr sent word to Jarl Hákon to come to him. He had not yet sailed north when this happened. The jarl went to see the king with a small troop, and the business was kept secret until he got to the king, and when they met the king forced the jarl to accept baptism, and he also had to promise to have it preached throughout his dominion. Then the king of the Danes got priests for him, and they parted after that. Then [118] a west wind blew up, and Hákon thought he had been in Denmark quite long enough and was eager to be gone; he put the priests and clerics ashore and raised his sail, sailed east through Eyrarsund and raided the land on both sides, burned dwellings and killed people and seized property wherever he could in the kingdom of the king of the Danes. And when he had got east to Gautland he cast the divining chips²¹⁶ and

²¹³ ÍF 29 117 has *fráogn*, a misprint for *frásogn*.

²¹⁴ Poppo, bishop of Schleswig.

²¹⁵ Ordeal by carrying hot iron (*jámburðr*) was widespread throughout Scandinavia, as elsewhere in Europe, until gradually abolished after the Lateran Council of 1215 banned clerical participation in the process. A bar of red-hot iron had to be carried a certain distance; the wound was then bandaged and inspected after three days; but see the more extreme ordeal of Haraldr gilli (p. 258 below). Clean healing was taken as proof of innocence. See Foote and Wilson 1980, 377–78.

²¹⁶ *felldi hann blótspán*: *at fella blótspán* was 'to throw sacrificial sticks (chips or shavings of wood)', referred to widely as a means of divination in pre-Christian times (e.g. *Landn* 234), presumably echoing the practice of the Germanic peoples referred to by Tacitus (*Germania* Book 1): 'Augury and divination by lot no people practise more diligently. The use of the lots is simple. A little bough is lopped off a fruit-bearing tree, and cut into small pieces; these are distinguished by certain marks, and thrown carelessly and at random over a white garment.' See Briem 1985, 172, de Vries 1956, I 435.

it seemed to be revealed that it would be a propitious time to fight a battle, and then he saw how two ravens followed the army all the way, screaming, as it says here:²¹⁷

81. On the field the felling-Týr
of flight²¹⁸ consulted oracles;
the tree-trunk of Heðinn's attire²¹⁹
took the war-Sága's²²⁰ lucky day.
And the battle-offerer²²¹
saw mighty corpse-vultures.²²²
The blood-bowl Týr²²³ then wanted
to break off lives of Gautar.
- Vellekla* 30
Hkr I 261
ÓTM I 146

Then Hákon left his ships behind and went ashore with all his troop, and harried throughout Gautland with the shield of war, and burned and ransacked dwellings wherever he went. Then Óttarr, jarl of the Gautar, came against him, and they fought, and the end between them was that Óttarr [119] took to flight, while the greater part of his army was killed, and Hákon took a large amount of property as booty, and went through Smáland and all the way to West Gautland, exacted tribute from all the people and with that came back to Norway, as is said here:

82. The jarl, where no man earlier
under Sqrli's dwelling²²⁴
had harried, held the meeting
of hollow-of-swords' fire;²²⁵
None brought rounds wrapped in
- Vellekla* 31
Hkr I 261
ÓTM I 146–47
3GT 15, 70 (ll. 1–2)

²¹⁷ The following five verses (as well as second halves to vv. 83 and 84) are said in *Hkr* to be from *Vellekla*.

²¹⁸ *flótta felli-Týr*: 'felling Týr (god) of fleeing men', warrior. *Hkr* has *Njörðr* in place of Týr, which avoids repetition of the god's name in line 7 (where it bears alliteration).

²¹⁹ *Heðins váða draugr*: 'tree-trunk (man) of Heðinn's (legendary hero's) garments (mailcoat)', warrior.

²²⁰ *dolga Sága*: 'Sága (goddess) of battle', valkyrie.

²²¹ *hildar haldboði*: 'one who offers to hold a battle', warrior.

²²² *hrægammr*: 'corpse-vulture', raven.

²²³ *teinlautar Týr*: 'Týr (god) of the sacrificial bowl', man who performs sacrifice. The word *teinlaut* does not occur elsewhere.

²²⁴ *Sqrta rann*: 'hall of Sqrli (legendary warrior)', shield (under which a warrior shelters).

²²⁵ *hjørtautar hyrjar þing*: 'meeting of fire of the hollow place of the sword', meeting of fire of the shield, sword-meeting, battle.

resting-place of the heather-
whale²²⁶ further from the sea; the ruler
travelled over all Gautland.

83. The god of Fróði's storm²²⁷ stacked *Vellekla* 32
the slain on the battlefield; *Hkr* I 262
the gods' kinsman²²⁸ could glory
in gain; Óðinn had the slaughtered.

Hákon went down east into Vík, and the mission of the king of the Danes concerning the true faith had arrived there, and he instructed that sacrifices must cease [120] and that people must be baptised. And because of his power no one put up a protest, and many had themselves baptised. But Jarl Hákon made everyone change to heathen sacrifices wherever he went, and promised them his protection, and many made heathen sacrifices who had previously accepted baptism, as is said here:

84. At once, wise, he enabled *Vellekla* 15
honour of all Einriði's²²⁹ *Hkr* I 241
famed temple grounds, ravaged, *ÓTM* I 98
and the gods' sacred places.

After that Hákon went to the north of the country and ruled the territory that the king of the Danes had given him, without paying tribute from then on, and directed his raids at Vík, which was then under the control of the King of the Danes, as Einarr skálaglamm says:

85. Now all land from Vík northwards *Vellekla* 17
acknowledges the jarl's rule; *Hkr* I 242
widely the bringer of battle- *ÓTM* I 98–99
board storm,²³⁰ Hákon, grows mighty.

²²⁶ *loptvarðaðr lyngs barða rønd*: 'shield (lit. rim) covered in the loft (sleeping-chamber) of the whale of the heather (snake)', shield covered in gold. *barða* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *garða*.

²²⁷ *Fróða hríðar úss*: 'god of Fróði's storm', god of battle, warrior.

²²⁸ *ragna konr*: 'descendant of gods', member of the Ynglingr family.

²²⁹ *Einriði*: Þórr.

²³⁰ *ímunborðs veðrgeðir*: 'provider of storm of the battle-board (shield)', causer of battle, warrior.

[121] And Eyvindr skáldaspillir says this:

86. Under whose hand
all the bride of the Týr
of slaughter²³¹ lies, east
to the Egðir's home.²³²

Háleygjatal 15

CHAPTER 18

A little later Haraldr Gormsson summoned out the *levy* throughout all Denmark, and went with the whole Danish army to Norway. And when he came round Líðendisnes to the district from which tribute had been withheld from him, he burned and had people killed wherever he went, and laid waste everything along the coast except five estates which remained in Læradalr in Sogn. King Haraldr went all the way north to Staðr, while Jarl Hákon waited with a large force north of Staðr. And when the King of the Danes learned of the size and readiness of Hákon's force he turned back south to Denmark, and they did not meet on this occasion.

CHAPTER 19

King Haraldr Gormsson raided in the land of the Wends and had a great stronghold built there at a place called Jóm, and since then that stronghold has been called Jómsborg.²³³ He put a commander in charge of it, and himself returned to Denmark, and for a long time then there was hostility between the Wends and the Danes, and each side made raids in the lands of the other. But late in the days of King Haraldr Gormsson [122] he appointed Sigvaldi, son

²³¹ *val-Týs brúðr*: 'bride, wife of the Týr (god) of the slain', wife of Óðinn, the goddess Jörð; i.e. the earth, land.

²³² *Egða býr*: 'dwelling of the Egðir', Agðir, southernmost district of Norway.

²³³ The story of the founding of Jómsborg and the relations between the legendary band of warriors, the Jómsvíkingar, is told in fictionalised form in the Icelandic *Jómsvíkinga saga*. The first version of the saga was written around 1200 or perhaps even earlier; its textual history is complex, but one of the two redactions was used as a source for both *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*, and for the twelfth-century poem *Jómsvíkingadrápa*; part of the other was incorporated into some versions of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* (Ólafur Halldórsson 1993, 343).

of Jarl Strút-Haraldr, to the command of Jóm sborg, and the king of the Danes gave Sigvaldi the title of jarl. Then many chieftains went from Denmark to Jóm sborg: Jarl Sigvaldi's brother Þorkell háfi (the Tall), Búi digri (the Fat), his brother Sigurðr, and Vagn Ákason; he was the sister's son of Búi digri. The Jóm svíkingar conquered much of the territory of King Búrizleifr (Boleslav I), who was then ruling over the land of the Wends.

Soon after that it happened in Denmark that King Haraldr took ill and died, and so did Jarl Strút-Haraldr, Sigvaldi's father, in the same year. And Sveinn Haraldsson was accepted as king in Denmark.

And when Sigvaldi heard of the death of King Haraldr he made peace with King Búrizleifr of Vinðland, and married his daughter, who was called Ástriðr, and promised to bring King Sveinn to Vinðland to see him. Soon afterwards Jarl Sigvaldi made ready a ship and went on it to Denmark, and landed by Sjóland a short distance from where King Sveinn was attending a feast. Then Sigvaldi pretended to be sick, and sent word to the king that he should come to see him, saying that he had urgent business with him which he wished to have kept secret from other people. The king believed Sigvaldi's message, and went with few people to see Sigvaldi on the ship. But as soon as King Sveinn was on the ship with the jarl Sigvaldi ordered the anchor to be raised and the sail hoisted, for there was a fair wind offshore, and he sailed off with King Sveinn to Jóm sborg.

Next Sigvaldi sent word to his father-in-law, King Búrizleifr, and said that King Sveinn had come to Jóm sborg, and that he himself was willing to arbitrate between them or else allow King Sveinn to go back to Denmark. In turn, he tried to persuade King Sveinn to make peace with King Búrizleifr according to the settlement that Sigvaldi decided between them. If he was not willing to do that, then he would come into the presence and power of [123] King Búrizleifr. They came to terms in this way: each of the kings agreed to Jarl Sigvaldi's judgement, and when they had settled this by a binding agreement between them the jarl pronounced the terms of their settlement, saying first that King Sveinn should marry King Búrizleifr's daughter Gunnhildr, and her dowry²³⁴ should be that part

²³⁴ *heimanfylgja* 'dowry'. The *heimanfylgja* was a gift that, literally, was to accompany (*fylgja*) a bride from home to become part of the marital property; distinct from the obligatory *mundr* or, as it is called in *Fagrskinna*, *tilgjof* (translated here as

of Vinðland that the Danes had conquered in the realm of the king of the Wends. On the other hand King Búrizleifr was to marry Þyri, daughter of King Haraldr and sister of King Sveinn. She had previously been married to Styrbjörn, son of King Óláfr of the Swedes; her father, King Haraldr, was still alive then. He had given her extensive estates on Fjón and south in Falstr and Borgundarhólmr. Jarl Sigvaldi made a division in this way: Búrizleifr was to keep that part of Vinðland which had previously been apportioned to the estates of Gunnhildr, Búrizleifr's daughter, whom King Sveinn was to marry, and King Haraldr's daughter Þyri was now to have that; and Gunnhildr Búrizleifsdóttir was now to possess all those estates in Denmark which Þyri had owned, and receive all her bridal gift in Denmark, and Þyri all her bridal gift in Vinðland, except that the jarl reserved from the division Jómsborg and all the districts that he assigned to it. Then King Búrizleifr and Jarl Sigvaldi prepared a great feast in Jómsborg, and at that feast the wedding of King Sveinn and the betrothal of King Búrizleifr were celebrated.

After that King Sveinn went back to his kingdom with his wife Gunnhildr. They later had two sons, the elder called Knútr ríki (the Great), the second Haraldr.

When King Sveinn came back from Vinðland, he sent word to his sister Þyri, and told her everything he had decided with King Búrizleifr in Vinðland. Þyri was not pleased at this news, for she was Christian, and said that she would rather die among Christians than come into the power of a heathen king and violate her Christianity. She stayed on her estates and looked after her property for some years after that.

CHAPTER 20

[124] Soon afterwards King Sveinn sent word to Jarl Sigvaldi and his brother Þorkell, and said that he wanted to hold the memorial feast for his father King Haraldr according to ancient custom, and invited the brothers to come to it and hold the memorial feast for their father Strút-Haraldr, and said that he must invite all the impor-

'bridal gift') that was contributed by the bridegroom and technically remained in the ownership of his wife.

tant people in his kingdom, and wished that these two feasts should both be in the same place, and said that he himself would undertake the business of preparing the feast, and would draw for expenses both on his own royal estate and on the jarl's estate in Skáni which Strút-Haraldr, Jarl Sigvaldi's father, had owned, and invited the Jómsvíkingar to come in as large a number as the jarl wished to bring with him. And when the messengers came to Sigvaldi some men dissuaded him earnestly from this journey, and considered it incautious to have so much trust in the king of the Danes, but others encouraged the jarl and told him to go with such a great troop that the Danes would have no power over the Jómsvíkingar, and this plan was adopted. The jarl made ready sixty ships to leave Jómsborg and took with him on that expedition all the most powerful men that were in Jómsborg.

King Sveinn had the feast prepared at Hringstaðir on Sjóland and took great care that nothing that could be got should be lacking that could make it more magnificent and better than it would have been without it. The Jómsvíkingar arrived on the day the feast began, and King Sveinn welcomed Jarl Sigvaldi and all his troop with great friendliness. And when memorial feasts were held according to ancient custom, it was required to hold them in the year of the death of the man in whose memory the feast was being held. And he who had the feast prepared must not sit in the seat of the man whose memory he was honouring before men had drunk the memorial toast. The first evening, when people came to the feast, many toasts had to be offered up in the same way as memorial toasts are now, and they dedicated those toasts to their most important kinsmen, or to Þórr, or to other of their gods, in heathen times, and finally they had to drink [125] the *bragafull*,²³⁵ and then he who was holding the feast had to make a vow on the *bragafull*, as did all those attending the memorial feast, and then he had to mount into the seat of the man who was being honoured, and he then entered fully into possession of the inheritance and honour of the dead man, but not before.

²³⁵ Snorri Sturluson gives a similar, though briefer, account of a memorial feast in *Ynglinga saga* (Hkr I 66). In other texts the form is *bragarfull*; the sense is apparently 'toast of a great man', whether the first element is the noun *bragr* 'the outstanding or chief one', the name Bragi, or an obsolete noun **bragi* 'man'.

The first evening, when King Sveinn and Jarl Sigvaldi were drinking the toasts to their fathers, the king set men to ply the leaders of the Jómsvíkingar with the strongest drink which would make them as drunk as possible, and when the *bragafull* was being offered and before King Sveinn mounted into his father's seat, he made a vow that before three winters had passed he would go to England with an army and kill King Aðalráðr (Ethelred)²³⁶ or drive him out of the country, or else be killed himself if he did not succeed in that. After the king had spoken and had seated himself in his father's seat, Jarl Sigvaldi made a vow that before three years had passed he would have killed Jarl Hákon in Norway or driven him from the country, or would himself have been killed.

Then the king said, 'That is spoken well and like a great man, and we had rather you had that kingdom than Hákon or his son Eiríkr.'

Then Sigvaldi's brother Þorkell made a vow that he would go with his brother to Norway, and not flee before the stern of Sigvaldi's ship was two lengths away 'if we fight on ships, or his standard in the rear if we fight on land.'

The oath that Búi swore was that he would go to Norway and fight alongside Sigvaldi against father and son, Hákon and Eiríkr, and not flee before fewer were standing up than had fallen, and still hold out for as long as Sigvaldi wished to fight. After his brother Búi, Sigurðr hvíti (the White) made a vow that he would accompany his brother Búi to Norway for as long as his courage held out, and not flee while Búi lived. Then Vagn made a vow that he would go with his kinsman Búi and take part in the battle with Sigvaldi and not flee, and he added that he would not come back to Denmark before he had shared the bed of Ingibjörg, daughter of Þorkell leira (Muddy field), a great [126] chieftain in Norway, against Þorkell's will, or else have killed him. Björn brezki (the Welshman) made a vow that he would go with Vagn, his foster-son. Hávarðr höggvandi (the Hewer) and Áslákr hólmskalli (Island-bald), Búi's servants, made vows that they would not flee from him whether he was alive or dead, when the battle was over. But when the making of vows was finished people went to sleep, and the next morning Sveinn asked

²³⁶ Ethelred 'the Unready', king of England 978–1016. Sveinn's success in making good his boast is referred to in chapter 26 (p. 132) below.

how much Sigvaldi remembered about the oaths people had sworn, and he remembered little about it and thought he had said too much, but there the matter had to rest. And the Jómsvíkingar planned to start their expedition to Norway immediately on leaving the feast, for they did not want news to reach Norway before them so that Jarl Hákon or his son Eiríkr could make preparations against them.

CHAPTER 21

When the Jómsvíkingar had made ready for the expedition from Denmark to Norway with all the troops they had brought from Jónsborg, they went north taking sixty *longships*, almost all of them large, all well-equipped with weapons and good men. They brought their forces to Jaðarr on the eve of Yule,²³⁷ and were caught by a great storm, but were able to save all their ships. They at once made forays, plundering and killing people wherever they went. The people of the country fled away, some taking to ships and some to the mountains or into the forests. There was a powerful landowner called Geirmundr; no news of this came to him. The Vikings came to him during the night, and he escaped into an upper room with a few people. Then the Vikings began to chop down the upper room, while Geirmundr and the others defended themselves. And when he saw that they would be caught, he jumped out of the room and landed standing on the ground. Vagn was nearby and struck Geirmundr's arm above the wrist and severed it at once. Geirmundr ran to the sea and got himself a craft and men with it, and sailed until he reached Jarl Hákon. Geirmundr had heard the Jómsvíkingar named, including Vagn, as he ran away, and said that Vagn [127] was a hunter of small fry, since he struck no more than a hand from the man standing in front of him. Geirmundr saw Jarl Hákon at a feast at a place called Skuggi,²³⁸ and his son Jarl Eiríkr was also

²³⁷ *Jólanótt*: the eve of the first day of the festival of *Jól* (Yule), which was the pagan midwinter festival, adapted after the conversion to Christianity to the celebration of Christmas. Probably the duration of the feast for thirteen days was influenced by Christian custom; some sources suggest that it lasted for twenty days.

²³⁸ *Jómsvíkinga saga* refers to 'the estate which is called Skuggi, and the man who held the feast was called Erlingr; he was a landed man [*lendr maðr*]' (*Jóms* (291), 169–70).

there. When Geirmundr went into the jarl's presence he was sitting at table, and Geirmundr greeted him. The jarl asked for news.

Geirmundr replied, 'There is some news.'

The jarl answered, 'Let it be good news.'

'It is certainly not good,' said Geirmundr, 'but it is true,' and he said that an army had come into the country from Denmark, 'and has inflicted great damage on your realm, lord.'

Hákon replied angrily, 'This news is a wicked lie, and Norway would have been laid waste long ago if the Danes had invaded Norway every time you reported it, and you will not leave off before someone who says such things is strung up.'

Geirmundr said, 'Not many weeks will pass from now before you find it proved true,' and he held up the stump of his arm and said that with it, and many other wounds, he could confirm the truth of his story.

Now Jarl Hákon and all his advisers became very concerned; the first plan to be adopted was to light the beacons and send out arrow-messages and ships and to summon to him every man who dared to defend himself and his property. Jarl Hákon went with a single ship in and out along every fjord, and no one knew where he stopped for the night or where he could not be expected.

The troops that arrived first and were furthest from the Vikings gathered together in large detachments, while those who were nearest to the invaders fled away and went to reinforce the army with Jarl Hákon and his son Eiríkr.

The Jómsvíkingar advanced north along the coast and met with no resistance. They brought all their force north past Staðr, sailed first to Hereyjar, and there had news and reports of Jarl Hákon, but learned no more of him than that he was in among the fjords, sometimes to the north, sometimes to the south. They set their course with the army in from the common shipping lane and towards the island called Hqð, and there took booty from a coastal raid onto their ships. Búi digri with his troop had gone ashore and they were driving [128] many cattle before them to the ships.

An old *bóndi* came to them and called to the Vikings:

'You are not acting like real soldiers in a strange land, having travelled a long way. You are great show-offs and want to make names for yourselves on this expedition; you are capturing kids and calves, nanny-goats and cows, and it would add more to your rep-

utation to leave them be and instead catch the bear which must now almost have reached its stall, if you can manage it.’

Then Búi answered, ‘What bear are you talking about, fellow, which we shall be lucky to catch?’

The *bóndi* replied, ‘That same bear which, if you do not catch it now, will have all of you in its jaws before long.’

Then Búi answered, ‘Tell us, *bóndi*, good and true news that we need to know, and we will reward you well for it.’

Then the *bóndi* replied, ‘Whether you reward me well or not at all, I can tell you about Jarl Hákon, where he is lying in at Elptr,²³⁹ and I do not know whether he has one ship or two, but there are no more than three, and today he was not rowed north to his army, and I think he must be doomed since he is being so unwary, and he has certainly not heard about you; otherwise he would not behave like this.’

Then Búi said to his men, ‘Quickly, down to the ships; let us be closest to the victory, and make the most of having news of him first.’

Then he who was nimblest ran fastest, and the *bóndi* turned the livestock back across to the island. Búi ordered his men to cut the mooring-ropes and put the ships out from the shore, and had a trumpet blown to signal that the force was to make haste. Jarl Sigvaldi asked where Búi wanted to row, and what he had heard about Jarl Hákon. Búi answered, commanding them all to row, saying that he expected that that day they would manage to catch the fox by the tail, ‘who is now trailing his brush in along the coast here.’

Then Sigvaldi answered, ‘You have not caught his tail yet, and I think it more likely that you have been be tricked.’

Then Búi replied, ‘You will not dare fight against Jarl Hákon if you meet him with his army, if you dare not put forward sixty ships now while he has only three ships at the most.’

Búi urged his men strongly that they should row. Vagn was [129]

²³⁹ *inn a Ælftrum* (B), *inn a Almunnd hamrum* (A). These names are recorded only in *Fagrskinna*; according to *Jómsvíkinga saga*, Hákon is located *fyrir innan eyra Höð, á Hjörungavági* (*Jóms* (291), 175). Megaard (1999, 41–44) argues that ‘*inn a Ælftrum*’ represents the local name *Eltranaset* for the western point of the island Sula, slightly north of Hqð (Hareidlandet), supporting the possibility that *Fagrskinna* B was written for an aristocratic family in Sunn-Mœrr.

also very ready; then Sigvaldi ordered the moorings to be cast off and they went with the whole force in around the north of the island of Hqð, and there was a little wind blowing that way.

Then Sigvaldi said, 'It may be that Búi digri will himself fall into the bear-stall he intended to catch Jarl Hákon in. He is acting like a doomed man.'

Búi went first with his troop, then Vagn, then Sigvaldi. They went in until they reached (the bay) Hjörungavágr.²⁴⁰ There they met before them Jarl Hákon, with not one ship, but a *hundred* and sixty (180) ships. There were warships and *longships*, merchant ships and trading ships, which Jarl Hákon had got, with high freeboard, and all well equipped with men, weapons and stones. With him was that foremost powerful man, his son Jarl Eiríkr, and also Sveinn and Sigurðr and Erlingr, sons of Jarl Hákon but not by the same mother as Eiríkr. They all commanded ships. This Þórðr Kolbeinsson²⁴¹ says in a poem he composed about Jarl Eiríkr:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 87. Ships of all shapes in plenty | <i>Eiríksdrápa</i> 2 |
| the shield-maple ²⁴² sent out | <i>Hkr</i> I 276 |
| to sea, resounding—my | <i>Jóms</i> (510) 69 |
| skald's work grows, praise-generous— | <i>Skáldsk</i> I 84 (1st half) |
| when the warrior, no mean | <i>ÓTM</i> 181–82 |
| weapon-hardener, ²⁴³ with shields | |
| fenced the land of his father; | |
| before it, lime-shields gathered. | |

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| [130] 88. The war-trying jarl, who urged | <i>Eiríksdrápa</i> 3 |
| out to sea stud-horses | <i>Hkr</i> I 277–78 |
| of planks, ²⁴⁴ pointed towering | <i>Jóms</i> (510) 70 |

²⁴⁰ On the location of the battle see Megaard 1999.

²⁴¹ Þórðr Kolbeinsson was a well-known skald from Hítarnes in western Iceland; he figures as villain in the semi-fictional poet's saga *Bjarnar saga Hítarlakappa*, which attributes a number of occasional verses, many of them libellous, to him. In the kings' sagas fifteen verses and two half-verses in honour of Eiríkr are attributed to him. These are said in various manuscripts to belong to two named poems, the *Belgskakadrápa* ('Bag-Shaking Lay?'), composed according to *Bjarnar saga* in about 1007, and an *Eiríksdrápa*, generally assumed to be a memorial poem composed after Eiríkr's death in 1014. Fidjestøl has argued that all these verses belong to a single poem, for which two names were current (1982, 115–16). Verses 87, 88 and 89 (with a second half-verse) below are cited in *Heimskringla*, where they are said to belong to the *Eiríksdrápa*.

²⁴² *skjaldhlynnr*: 'shield-maple', warrior.

²⁴³ *oddherðir*: 'point-promoter', warrior.

²⁴⁴ *hrefnis stóð*: 'stud of the plank', fleet of ships.

prows against Sigvaldi;
 many oar-shafts were shaking;
 shrank from death never the
 comforters of carrion birds²⁴⁵
 cutting the sea with oar-blades.

ÓTM I 184

89. Against them to war glided
 on gleaming sea²⁴⁶—far along
 the coast sailed the sea-force—
 slender²⁴⁷ Danish warships.

Eiríksdrápa 4
Hkr I 279–80
 ÓTM I 187

CHAPTER 22

Then the jarls, Hákon and Eiríkr, had their trumpets sounded, their standards set up and preparations made for a rowing attack. Jarl Hákon drew up the squadron which was to go into battle with him on each side, [131] and these are the commanders: Skopti and Rognvaldr from Ærvík. They turned to attack where Jarl Sigvaldi was facing them, and the jarls met in battle. On the starboard side of Jarl Hákon was his son Sigurðr, and with him Eyvindr Finnsson and Erlendr steik (Steak) from Naumudalr, both *landed men* and famous. They advanced against Sigurðr hvíti, brother of Búi digri. And out on the wing was Jarl Eiríkr, and with him Þorsteinn miðlangr (Long-waisted), who was most famous of all Vikings, and Þórir hjörtr (Hart) from Vágar in the north, a *landed man*. They went into action against Búi digri, and a hard fight took place between them. On the port side of Jarl Hákon's formation advanced his son Erlingr, and with him Járnskeggi from Úthaugr in Yrjar, and secondly Styrkár from Gimsar, who were the foremost of the *landed men* from north of Staðr. Against them advanced Þorkell háfi, Sigvaldi's brother. On the outer branch of the formation Sveinn Hákonarson drove forward his ship, and with him Gizurr hvíti (the White), a *landed man* from up on Valdres, and Þorkell leira (Muddy field), whose family was from east in Vík. These three leaders engaged in battle against Vagn Ákason, and this was the harshest and greatest of battles.

These Icelanders were with Jarl Hákon: Skúmr and Þórðr, who

²⁴⁵ *sárgamms huggandi*: 'comforter of the wound-vulture (raven)', warrior.

²⁴⁶ *gleheimr*: 'gleaming world', sea.

²⁴⁷ *mævar* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* (A) has *mavar*; the word is omitted in (B).

was called *qrhvond* (Left-handed), sons of Þorkell auðgi (the Rich) from Mýrar in Dýrafjörðr in the west, and Vígfúss Víga-Glúmsson, [Tindr Hallkelsson],²⁴⁸ he composed a *drápa* about Jarl Hákon, and in that *drápa* much is told about the Battle of the Jónsvíkingar. From these men's words people in that country have preserved the memory of these events, some of it in poetry, and some in other narratives. Vígfúss composed this before the battle took place, and he was hardening a club in the fire.

Then Jarl Hákon asked what it was for. He answered in this fashion:²⁴⁹

- | | |
|---|---|
| [132] 90. In my hand I'm holding,
for the head ready,
Búi's bone-breaker,
bane of Sigvaldi;
if we come through,
this club of oak
will not be
welcome to Danes. | <i>Jóms</i> (291) 180
<i>4GT</i> 131 |
|---|---|

Then he also spoke this:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 91. Good sport we have going
while the girl-of-leeks ²⁵⁰ comrade
stays at home; the storm of
the staff of Viðrir ²⁵¹ gathers;
the lady's man, I allege,
lays his cheek in warm shelter
in a girl's arms; darts we adorn;
a different lot he looks for. | <i>Jóms</i> (510) 74
<i>Flat</i> I 189 |
|---|---|

This battle was extremely famous, and the Danes have never fought such a battle against Norwegians before nor since, because the Norwegians had a greater force than the Danes, and for a long time

²⁴⁸ The name of Tindr Hallkelsson is found in *Fsk* (A) but omitted from (B). It seems certain that it is his *drápa* on Jarl Hákon that is referred to here. Two and a half verses on the battle are attributed to Tindr in *Hkr* (I 281–82, 286), though the *drápa* is not mentioned; an additional seven and a half are preserved in *Jóms* (510). Tindr was the uncle of Gunnlaugr ormstunga.

²⁴⁹ This verse is attributed to Þorleifr skúma in *Jónsvíkinga saga*.

²⁵⁰ *feima lauka*: 'girl of leeks', woman.

²⁵¹ *Viðris vandar veðr*: 'storm of Viðrir's (Óðinn's) staff', storm of the sword, battle.

the Danes had the best of it, and Sveinn Hákonarson and his men were pulling backwards against the oar-loops²⁵² before Vagn, and they were on the point of flight until Jarl Eiríkr [133] brought up Járnbarðinn²⁵³ and Vagn gave orders to row away, so that then the ships of both lay facing each other as they had before.

When Eiríkr came back to his place in the formation, Búi had got the advantage and had cut the cables and set the fleet loose. Then Eiríkr laid Barðinn alongside Búi's ship so that they could fasten the ships together at both ends and side against side, and neither would cut loose before one or the other was disabled. Then many men fell in the slaughter, for both sides used their cutting weapons. Any cowardly men on board had a hard time.

Then a great deal happened in a short time when it came to killing, and no one knew the number of men that fell there. More Norwegians fell in the first part of the battle, but it ended with the Danes in retreat, and the main reasons for that were superior numbers and the fierce attack, and in addition the weather was so bad: such hail was falling that one hailstone weighed an ounce. In the face of this the Danes had to turn away. Then Sigvaldi had the cables cut and his ship steered away; his brother Þorkell and Sigurðr hvíti immediately did the same, and they turned out of the bay.

Vagn Ákason saw that and said, 'Why are you fleeing, evil dog? You are selling your men into death for a low price, and you will take home with you that shame which you will live with all your life and which will long be remembered,'—and he threw a thonged spear at the moment the ship turned. The shot struck the steersman between the shoulders, but it was another man, not Sigvaldi, though Vagn had meant to shoot him. Then all the strength of the Danish army had gone, although much of it had already been struck down.

Then Jarl Hákon laid his warship along one side of Búi inn digri, and there was a fierce resistance there. Áslákr hólmskalli and Hávarðr höggvandi leaped up onto Jarl Hákon's ship and killed many a man. The brothers Þórðr and Skúmr were standing near them, and they both took on Hávarðr. He cut off Þórðr's right arm, and Skúmr suffered many serious wounds before Hávarðr lost both legs. Vígfúss Víga-Grúmsson took hold of [134] an anvil which had been lying

²⁵² *síga á hǫmlu*: pull against the oar-loops; to row backwards, i.e. be in retreat.

²⁵³ Eiríkr's ship Járnbarðinn (or Barði, as it is named in verse 110) is said in chapter 24 to be 'the largest of all ships'.

on the deck, where he had been using it to clinch his sword hilt. He threw the anvil with both hands at Áslákr hólmskalli; the point pierced his head so that the skull smashed and the brain spilled out. Then Jarl Eiríkr and his men had got up onto Búi's ship. Þorsteinn miðlangr was the first to come down *amidships*. He struck Búi across the forehead so hard that both edges of the sword-blade were buried. Búi wounded Þorsteinn under the left arm, almost cutting him in two in the middle. Then Búi seized two chests full of gold and threw them overboard, and all his crew jumped overboard with their chests and were all killed. Then the jarls turned all their force against Vagn; they put up a stout and long defence, for the ship had high sides and they were fine fellows aboard, while it was small ships that were next to it. Then Jarl Hákon ordered that a large cargo ship be taken and told them to withdraw the small ships alone and bring up the bigger ships. About that Vígfúss Víga-Glúmsson composed:

92. It was no easy venture *Jóms* (510) 87
 against Vagn, when I witnessed
 sword-split gates of Geitir;²⁵⁴
 the gale of Hogni²⁵⁵ clamoured.
 There we went in battle, thruster
 of the thin ice of Gunnr,²⁵⁶
 to the Danes' cargo carrier;
 cruel was the flight of spears.

[135] It finished as was to be expected, that those who were of higher rank and had greater force were more powerful. Vagn was taken captive together with many of his men, and a cable was passed round their legs, but their arms were left free, and they set thirty men on the shore with him. All the other Danes had fled by then, or had been killed or mortally wounded. Then Þorkell leira went up to behead them.

Then one of the Jómsvíkingar said, 'Now we will find out something we have always argued about, whether a headless man has any consciousness or not; and if I am conscious when my head is

²⁵⁴ *hurð Geitis*: 'gate of Geitir (a sea-king)', shield. *Geitis* is the reading of *Jómsvíkinga saga*, where *Fsk* has *getti* (B), *gáttar* (A).

²⁵⁵ *Hogna hregg*: 'storm of Hogni (legendary warrior)', battle.

²⁵⁶ *Gunnar þunniss þrængvir*: 'thruster of thin ice of Gunnr (valkyrie)', thruster of a sword, warrior.

off, I will stick my knife in the ground.' The head of this man was cut off, and he was not conscious afterwards, as was to be expected. Then another was led forward. This one said this, laughing:

93. A scar I gave
 the jarl last spring;
 that was what I did then,
 and now it is this. *Jóms* (510) 94

'Now strike,' he said.

Then Jarl Eiríkr took him aside and said, 'Do you want quarter?' 'That depends,' said he, 'who is offering it.'

'He who has authority to do so is offering it,' said he, 'Jarl Eiríkr.' 'Then I will gladly accept,' said he.

Next, one was led forward for execution and said this: 'Ram!'

They asked, 'Why do you say that?'

He replied, 'Many a ewe has been named by your men today, and so I wanted to get the ram for them.'²⁵⁷

That was considered a funny and fearless thing to say. The jarl asked if he wished for quarter, and he said that he did.

Then yet another was led forward for his execution, a good-looking man, tall and with luxuriant hair. He swept his hair forward over his head and said:

'Don't spoil my hair, don't make it bloody.'

The man who was to behead him replied, 'I will take care of that.'

He took a stick [136] and twisted it in the hair. The one who was to strike swung his sword, but the Jómsvíkingr tugged at the man who was holding onto his hair, and the sword struck against that man's arms and severed both his forearms. Then the man who was bound, for both his hands were tied, said:

'Some of the Jómsvíkingar still live.'

Jarl Eiríkr said, 'What is your name?'

'I am called Haraldr,' said he.

'Whose son?' asked the jarl.

'I am reputed to be the son of Búi digri.'

²⁵⁷ The word *á*, accusative of *ær* 'ewe', is also an exclamation, 'ow!'. The young man's pun implies that the Norwegians cried out with pain in the battle.

‘That may well be true,’ said the jarl. ‘Do you want quarter?’

He answered, ‘What better choice can be expected?’

Then said Þorkell leira, ‘Must all these men have quarter, who have killed our kinsmen before our own eyes? What we are doing here is not helpful.’

Then Jarl Eiríkr replied, ‘Did you not know before now that I was more powerful than you?’

Then Þorkell replied, ‘It may be that we will take turns in getting our own way.’ He had a large axe in his hand, got up and ran furiously to where Vagn was sitting, meaning to kill him. Skarði víkingr (the Viking) started up and fell in front of Þorkell’s feet, and Þorkell tripped over him and let go of the axe. Then Vagn jumped up and took the axe and struck Þorkell across the shoulders so that the axe stuck in the ground. Jarl Eiríkr offered Vagn quarter, realising that it would be a great pity to kill such a leader. Vagn accepted that, together with all those who remained of his men.

Jarl Hákon sat down on a log, his advisers with him. Then a bow-string twanged on the ship that was closest to the shore. Next a man tumbled off the log; it was Gizorr hvíti, and he was shot through with an arrow, and died immediately. Then there was a rush out to the ship, and there was a man found on his knees there, and that was Hávarðr hoggvandi, and he asked:

‘Boys,’ he said, ‘did anyone drop down off the log?’ They said that Gizorr hvíti was dead.

Then Hávarðr said, ‘It was a less lucky shot than I thought.’

They answered, ‘It was quite unlucky enough, and you won’t manage any more.’

They struck him blows so thickly that he would have been dead even if he had had three lives.

Jarl Hákon was dissatisfied that Vagn had been given quarter, and said [137] that it would turn out to be a very bad decision for them. Jarl Eiríkr said that even if he did not like it, he would have to put up with it, and they parted in anger, and Vagn went with Eiríkr and stayed with him for a while; next Vagn married Ingibjörg, daughter of Þorkell leira, and received a great deal of money. And in the spring Vagn went to Denmark, and Jarl Eiríkr gave him three well-equipped *longships*, and they parted friends.

After the battle Jarl Hákon went to Skúmr Þorkelsson and saw that he was mortally wounded, and said:

‘How bad it will be for your father, if you are not to come home to his side!’ Then Skúmr made a verse:²⁵⁸

94. Said the jarl to the sea-horse’s
servant,²⁵⁹ south of the water,
when on the gold-wire wounder²⁶⁰
was damage of wound-fire:²⁶¹
‘Surely your father suffers
sadness greatly, master
of the steed of the isle-circlet—²⁶²
so I think—if you must perish.’

Jóms (510) 89
Jóms (291) 191

Jarl Hákon had fathered the son called Eiríkr when he was fifteen years old; he later became jarl. When Jarl Hákon came back to Norway he married; his wife was Þóra, daughter of Skagi and sister of Tíðenda(News)-Skopti, and Skopti married Ingibjörg, [138] Jarl Hákon’s daughter. Sveinn was the name of the son of Jarl Hákon and Þóra, and their daughter was called Bergljót, who was married to Einarr þambarskelfir (Paunch-shaker). Two Sigurðs and Erlingr and Hemingr and Erlendr were sons of Jarl Hákon. Skopti and Ingibjörg had a son called Ormr. He was a jarl; Jarl Erlingr was descended from him. Skopti was so dear to Jarl Hákon that he had to moor his ship next to his in harbours, and no one dared do otherwise than to move away at once if he arrived. It happened on one occasion that Skopti came to join the jarl’s troop when his son, Eiríkr, was already lying in the berth, and Skopti told Eiríkr to move away, but Eiríkr said he would not move. Jarl Hákon heard that, and ordered the tarpaulin taken off his ship, and said that it would not be permitted for anyone to stay put in the berth to the disadvantage of Skopti. Then the tarpaulins came off the ships of Eiríkr and Skopti too. And when Eiríkr saw that he was short of men, he had his ship retreat out of the berth to make way for Skopti. During the following autumn Skopti went between his estates on a *cutter*. Eiríkr heard of that and he manned another ship of about the same size, set out to intercept Skopti and killed him and all his crew, as

²⁵⁸ In *Jómsvíkinga saga* this verse is attributed to Einarr skálaglamm.

²⁵⁹ *unnvíggs árr*: ‘messenger, servant of the wave-horse’, seafarer.

²⁶⁰ *seima sérir*: ‘damager of gold wire’, distributor of gold, generous man.

²⁶¹ *sávelds spjöll*: ‘harms of wound-fire’, harms (caused by) swords, wounds.

²⁶² *eybaugs viggja valdr*: ‘controller of the horse of the isle-ring’, master of the horse of the sea (which encircles islands), master of a ship, seafarer.

it says in the poem which Eyjúlfr dāðaskáld (Poet of Deeds) composed about Eiríkr:²⁶³

95. Late in the day to Meiti's meeting²⁶⁴ *Bandadrápa* 1
 he moved, when young, the distant *Hkr* I 249
 fishing-ground's ski²⁶⁵ with followers *Skáldsk* I 76 (1st half)
 no fewer than the bold chieftain's,
 when the wrathful raiser
 of red fire of the shield-rim's meadow²⁶⁶
 made fall—often the wolf-feeder²⁶⁷
 fed blood-falcons²⁶⁸—Skopti.

[139] That is counted as Eiríkr's first glorious exploit in his saga.²⁶⁹ Jarl Hákon and Jarl Eiríkr were always on bad terms after that.

After the battle with the Jómsvíkingar Jarl Hákon seemed to have achieved complete power, since he had defeated such great chieftains, and he seemed then to have no need to fear a threat to his rule from the Danes. Then he began to grow harsher to his countrymen, and became grasping and took no heed of the law, but the most serious thing was that he was immoral where women were concerned, and his men followed his example in that, and neither the kinswomen of powerful men nor the wives of either great or humble were spared. Then much was said about the unpopularity of the jarl and his following, and the *bændr* said, as proved true, that they would not suffer matters as they were, and one year after the battle with the Jómsvíkingar the *bændr* marched against Jarl Hákon and his men. He was staying then in Gaulardalr at the farm called Rimul, and he was killed there by his servant, who was called Skopti karkr (Thick-skin).²⁷⁰ Jarl Hákon's son Erlendr was killed in the sea,

²⁶³ In chapter 26 a poem by Eyjúlfr dāðaskáld about Jarl Eiríkr is named as *Bandadrápa* (Lay of the Gods). Verse 95 and two further verses are cited in *Heimskringla* and said to belong to this poem. The *stef* (refrain) is preserved in *Snorra Edda* and includes the word *banda* (from *bōnd* 'god'), which may have given the poem its name.

²⁶⁴ *Meita mót*: 'meeting of Meiti (a sea-king)', battle.

²⁶⁵ *úters skíð*: 'ski of the remote fishing-field', ship.

²⁶⁶ *randvallar rauðvita reiðir*: 'brandisher of the red fire of the field of the shield-boss (or rim)', brandisher of the fire of the shield, brandisher of the sword, warrior.

²⁶⁷ *ulfteitir*: 'wolf-gladdener', warrior.

²⁶⁸ *blóðvalr*: 'blood-falcon', raven.

²⁶⁹ See Introduction, p. 14.

²⁷⁰ Hákon's death is related at more length in other sources. In *HN* (2003, 94–95), Theodoricus (1998, 14) and Oddr Snorrason (Oddr 78–83) he is forced into flight by the ascendancy of Óláfr Tryggvason; in *Agrip* (16–17) and *Heimskringla* (I 293–98)

when he jumped overboard, with a tiller,²⁷¹ but his other brothers fled the country. Eiríkr headed east to Sweden to see King Óláfr of the Swedes, and stayed there in good favour for a long time and raided widely around the Baltic, as Þórðr Kolbeinsson says:²⁷²

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| 96. | The feeder of the gore-goose ²⁷³
got the better of princes;
Danes were forced to fall fast
before Sigurðr's brother. | <i>Belgskakadrápa</i> 1 (1st half) |
| [140] | Fate causes much, increaser
of criminals' suffering; ²⁷⁴
a little later, people's
lies brought death to Hákon. | <i>Belgskakadrápa</i> 2 (2nd half)
<i>Hkr</i> I 300, 337 (2nd half)
<i>ÓTM</i> I 244 (2nd half) |
| 97. | And to the land the bold lance's
land-prop ²⁷⁵ had vanquished
eastwards with the army
advanced the son of Tryggvi.
More in his mind than he
made known had Eiríkr,
schemes for the wealth-spoiler; ²⁷⁶
such was of him expected. | <i>Belgskakadrápa</i> 2 (1st half)
<i>Hkr</i> I 300, 337
<i>ÓTM</i> I 244 (1st half)

<i>Belgskakadrápa</i> 3 (2nd half) |
| [141] 98. | Angry, the jarl of Trondheim—
no one opposing it—
sought the Swedish king's counsel;
stubborn were the Þrœndir. | <i>Belgskakadrápa</i> 3
<i>Hkr</i> I 300, 337
<i>ÓTM</i> I 254
<i>3GT</i> 28, 108 |

the revolt against him is prompted by his attempt to abduct a woman, Guðrún Lundasól, 'for unseemly purposes'. He is killed while hiding in a pigsty, a location associated with prophetic dreams in *Ágrip*, Oddr, *HN* and *Hkr* (see note 3 above), though *Ágrip* adds a more obvious association: 'thus a man who had lived a life of filth ended his days of rule in a house of filth'.

²⁷¹ *Heimskringla* relates more clearly how Óláfr Tryggvason, pursuing Erlendr's ships in the belief that they were those of Jarl Hákon, killed Erlendr by throwing the tiller, aiming for another man as he swam (*Hkr* I 296).

²⁷² The first half of v. 96 does not appear elsewhere.

²⁷³ *blóðhelsingja bræðir*: 'feeder of the barnacle-goose of blood (raven)', warrior.

²⁷⁴ *varga meinremmir*: 'strengtheners of harm of outlaws', just ruler.

²⁷⁵ *lindar láðstafr*: 'prop of the ground of the (limewood) spear (shield)', warrior.

²⁷⁶ *auðs sérir*: 'harmer of wealth', generous lord.

CHAPTER 23

Óláfr digrlegggr (Fat-leg), son of Haraldr inn hárfagri, was the father of King Tryggvi, who married Ástríðr, daughter of Eiríkr bjóðaskalli (Inviting-bald), from Oprostaðir in the south. Their son was Óláfr, who as a child travelled with his mother into lands unknown, away from him and all the people of his family, received fostering and upbringing in the east in Hólmgarðr²⁷⁷ with Valdamarr gamli (Vladimir the Old), developed and grew up in both strength and years, and yet most of all in intelligence and all the skills that can enhance a good leader. He was greatly valued, as he deserved, by the king and all his men. King Valdamarr quickly established Óláfr as a chieftain among the retinue and to direct the warriors who defended the king's lands and increased the dominions of the men of Garðar. Óláfr won many kinds of fame in Garðaríki and further afield east of the Baltic, in the southern lands and the western lands, as Hallfrøðr vandræðaskáld (Troublesome Poet) says:²⁷⁸

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>99. I am told that the temple-
 destroyer in many places—
 the raven often in battles
 got blood—piled high corpses.</p> <p>[142] Mighty, to shrines merciless,
 he made Wends fall in battle
 and Jamtaland's offspring;
 early he achieved it.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Óláfsdrápa</i> 3 (1st half)
 Oddr 247</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Óláfsdrápa</i> 4 (2nd half)
 <i>Hkr</i> I 255 (2nd half)
 <i>ÓTM</i> I 138 (2nd half)</p> |
| <p>100. The Hqrðar's lord,²⁷⁹ sword-daring,
 endangered Gotlanders' lives;
 I learned that the gold-lessener²⁸⁰</p> | <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Óláfsdrápa</i> 4
 Oddr 247
 <i>Hkr</i> I 255 (1st half)</p> |

²⁷⁷ By the mid-tenth century the Rus, the Scandinavian rulers of Russia, had established this base on an island in the Volkhov. The Norse name means 'Island Town'; the Slavonic name is Gorodishche 'Old Town/Fort' to distinguish it from Novgorod 'New Town/Fort', founded two kilometers away about a century later.

²⁷⁸ Hallfrøðr vandræðaskáld was an Icelandic poet who is most celebrated for his verses in honour of King Óláfr Tryggvason, but he also, paradoxically, composed for Óláfr's enemies, the jarls Hákon and Eiríkr. *Hallfrøðar saga* records his conversion to Christianity under the patronage of Óláfr and his probably fictitious love affairs. The 'troublesomeness' recorded in his nickname is said in Oddr Snorrason's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* and other kings' sagas to have been given to him by the king because of his reluctance to accept baptism (Oddr 125).

²⁷⁹ *Hqrða dróttinn*: 'lord of the Hordalanders', i.e. king of Norway.

²⁸⁰ *gollskerðir*: 'diminisher of gold', generous lord.

- unleashed spear-storm²⁸¹ on Skáni.
 The rod who set running
 roller-steeds²⁸² in Denmark
 stripped bark from the birches
 of battle-shirts²⁸³ south of Heiðabœr.
- ÓTM I 138 (1st half)
Óláfsdrápa 5
Hkr I 263 (2nd half)
 ÓTM I 145 (2nd half)
101. The king had cut down often
 corpses of Saxons by the finish,
 Tryggvi's son, for the ill-tempered
 twisted steed of Leikn;²⁸⁴
 [143] plentifully gave the popular
 prince to the horsewoman-
 of-dusk's pale stud²⁸⁵ a drink
 of dark red blood of Frisians.
- Óláfsdrápa* 6
 Oddr 248
Hkr I 263
 ÓTM I 148
102. The ruler had hard helmet-
 harmers²⁸⁶ with blood reddened—
 why should one conceal it?—
 on the isle, and east in Garðar.
 The great settler of men's strife²⁸⁷
 dispatched bodies of Valkerar.²⁸⁸
 Flemings' flesh the war-leader²⁸⁹
 had fed to the ravens.
- Óláfsdrápa* 2
 Oddr 248
Hkr I 253 (1st half)
 ÓTM I 111 (1st half)
Óláfsdrápa 7
Hkr I 264 (2nd half)
 ÓTM I 148 (2nd half)
103. Young, the king most mighty
 made foes of the English;
 that nail-shower nourisher²⁹⁰ made
 Northumbrians perish.
 [144] Of British lands he harried
 inhabitants, the king hewing—
 he glutted the greed of the eagle
 of the gale of spears²⁹¹—Cumbrians.
- Óláfsdrápa* 8 (1st half)
 Oddr 248
Hkr I 264 (1st half)
 ÓTM I 160 (1st half)
Óláfsdrápa 9 (2nd half)
Hkr I 265 (2nd half)
 ÓTM I 161 (2nd half)

²⁸¹ *geirþeyr*: 'spear-storm', battle.

²⁸² *hlunnuiggja hleyþimeidr*: 'post, tree which causes steeds of the launching-roller to gallop', man who makes ships sail, seafarer.

²⁸³ *bœðserkjar birkir*: 'birch-trees of the battle-shirt', warriors. *Hjó barklaust*: 'hewed bark-less', i.e. cut off their mailcoats.

²⁸⁴ *ljótvaðinn Leiknar hestr*: 'deformed horse of Leikn (giantess)': wolf.

²⁸⁵ *kveldrīðu stóð*: 'stud (group of horses) of the (female) rider in the evening', horses of the giantess, wolves.

²⁸⁶ *hjalmskōð*: 'helmet-harmers', weapons.

²⁸⁷ *rógs rekka lægir*: 'calmer of strife of men', ruler.

²⁸⁸ *Valkerar*: people of Walcheren (Holland).

²⁸⁹ *herstefnir*: 'war-guider', ruler.

²⁹⁰ *naddskúrur nærir*: 'nourisher of the shower of spikes (spears)', warrior.

²⁹¹ *geira hriðar gjóðr*: 'sea-eagle of the storm of spears', bird of battle, raven.

104. On Man the gold-diminisher²⁹² *Óláfsdrápa* 8 (1st half)
 made play with swords; widely *Oddr* 248
 with weapons the wolf-feeder²⁹³ *Hkr* I 265
 wasted Scotland, battle-glad. *ÓTM* I 160 (1st half)
 Sent the bowstring's scarer²⁹⁴ *Óláfsdrápa* 9 (2nd half)
 soldiers of the isles²⁹⁵ falling— *ÓTM* I 161 (2nd half)
 the Týr of precious lances²⁹⁶
 longed for fame—and Irish.

King Óláfr Tryggvason had two wives, the Wendish Geila and the English Gyða. Óláfr was christened in Syllingar in the west. He came east into Norway from England, as was said before in Þórðr Kolbeinsson's poem.²⁹⁷ At the time when Jarl Hákon was killed, Óláfr came from the west and advanced into the north of the country, and when he came into Þrándheimr, all the people of Þrándheimr welcomed him, the people of Gaulardalr first; they all entered into an alliance, because both sides had difficulties to resolve. The *bændr* needed a leader who would be a protection to them, for they [145] had gathered men against Hákon, and he had died as a result of that, and surviving him to take vengeance were powerful and hardy sons. King Óláfr was also in great difficulty; his father had been killed and all his kingdom seized in battle, and he had been in exile from his kinsmen and ancestral lands ever since his childhood. The *bændr* had great support and numbers to offer to the king, and he could provide them in return with an honourable leader, fully developed in wisdom of all kinds, and he had often had to get out of difficulties and had always done so well, and so their agreement was forged, and all the *bændr* accepted Óláfr as king at the Eyraþing,²⁹⁸ and he confirmed the law by oath in return. They established it firmly that each side would give support to the other in all honourable matters.

Then King Óláfr travelled over Norway and took into his power everything from the northern border south to Denmark. He became

²⁹² *seims skerðir*: 'damager of gold wire', distributor of treasure, generous lord.

²⁹³ *ulfa greddir*: 'feeder of wolves', warrior.

²⁹⁴ *ýdrógar ægir*: 'terrifier of the bow-string', warrior (who makes the bow-string quiver as if frightened). *ýdrógar* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *ýdrauga*.

²⁹⁵ *eyverskr herr*: 'Island-dwelling host', here inhabitants of the Hebrides (Suðreyjar)?.

²⁹⁶ *dýrra tjörva Týr*: 'Týr (god) of valuable spears (?)', warrior.

²⁹⁷ See verse 97 above.

²⁹⁸ *Eyraþing*: the law assembly in Trøndelag.

a powerful and noble man, and had a great deal of trouble and many difficulties while he was king over Norway. He was the first of the kings of Norway to hold the true faith in God, and by his direction and power all the kingdom of Norway became Christian, as well as Orkney, the Faroes, Shetland, Iceland and Greenland. In relation to this Christian mission, many great events took place before so great a good could be brought about.

King Óláfr had a town founded in Niðaróss, where there had formerly been a single dwelling.²⁹⁹ King Óláfr had the great chieftains who wanted to rise up against Christianity put to death, but to some he gave large grants to carry out his business. Erlingr Skjálgsson married Ástríðr, Óláfr's sister, and he acted on behalf of the king in all the east of the country.

Hlaðir was the chief domain in Þrándheimr then. King Óláfr had a ship built at Hlaðahamrar. It was much larger and more splendidly built than other *longships*. It had thirty-four rowing-benches. On it were placed dragon-heads decorated with gold, and that ship was called Ormr inn langi (the Long Serpent). On this ship there was to be no man younger than twenty and none older than sixty. Many things were forbidden to the men who were to be on the Ormr, and none was to be on it [146] unless he was a man distinguished for something, and many instances show that on that ship were only champions, and no cowards or weaklings.

CHAPTER 24

King Sveinn of the Danes thought he had lost a great quantity of possessions that should have been part of the *bridal gift* of his wife Gunnhildr, because Þyri kept those possessions that her father King Haraldr had given her.³⁰⁰ And Búrizleifr thought himself badly cheated, although he had the *bridal gift* that Þyri was to have had, because the woman did not come to him. At the demand and urging of Gunnhildr, King Sveinn sent men to get Þyri and had her taken

²⁹⁹ Óláfr is credited in most sources with the founding of Niðaróss (now Trondheim), probably about 997. Theodoricus refers to a small settlement at Niðaróss when Óláfr arrives there: 'At that time there were only a few huts belonging to various traders there' (14); see also Oddr 122. See Andersson 1979, 14–16.

³⁰⁰ See chapter 19 and note 234 above.

against her will to Vinðland to King Búrizleifr, and he celebrated his wedding to her. But she was not any more willing to be married to a heathen than before, and she stayed with the king for a week accepting neither food nor drink from them, and with the help of her foster-father she succeeded in escaping into a forest and then on until she reached the sea, and there they got a little boat and went to Denmark, but she dared not land there, for she feared that her brother King Sveinn would immediately have her taken back to Vinðland if he knew that she had come there. So she went secretly to Norway to see King Óláfr, and asked him to find a way to help her. He took her in and made her his wife, without the consent of her brother King Sveinn.

She often asked King Óláfr to claim her property from King Búrizleifr in Vinðland, and considered that she had little of what she should have had by rights. Then the king made a journey out of the country, called up a great force and had sixty ships, and went east to Vinðland through the realm of the king of the Danes without his consent and against his will. King Óláfr gained a large amount of property and he got possession of everything he wanted, mostly because of [147] the help of Ástriðr, King Búrizleifr's daughter, who was married to Jarl Sigvaldi at Jóm.

When King Óláfr left Vinðland he sailed across to Denmark with a light breeze and fair weather, and the smaller ships went in front and the larger ones behind, because they needed more wind than those that were smaller. By an island off the coast of Vinðland there were gathered many important chieftains. This island is called Svǫldr.³⁰¹ In this fleet was King Sveinn of the Danes, who thought he had great grievances against King Óláfr. The first was that Óláfr was married to his sister Þyri, and had taken her without his consent. The second grievance was that he said that Óláfr had established

³⁰¹ The site of the battle is uncertain. *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* agree in locating it by the (unidentified) island Svǫldr, in the Baltic, while the German historian Adam of Bremen (AB 82) says that it took place in Øresund, between Zealand and Skåne; *Ágrip* (Ágrip 23) has *fyrir Sjólandi* 'off Sjælland'. In v. 109 below it is located *sunnr fyr Svǫldrar munni* 'south by the mouth of the Svǫldr', implying that Svǫldr is a river name; in another verse by Skúli it is *fyrir Svǫld* 'off Svǫldr' (*Skáldsk* I 60). Icelandic authors, presumably unfamiliar with the topography, seem to have interpreted these references to it as the name of an island, perhaps supported by Hallfrøðr's *á víðu holms sundi* 'on the wide sound of ?the island/?Holmr' (*Skj* B I 154) and Halldórr ókristni's *at holmi* 'off ?the island/?Holmr' (v. 110 below). See Megaard 1999, 49.

himself in Sveinn's tributary land, the kingdom of Norway, which his father King Haraldr had conquered.³⁰² Jarl Sigvaldi was there with the king of the Danes because he was the jarl of the king of the Danes. In this fleet was also a great leader, King Óláfr svenski (the Swede), king of the Swedes, who thought he had cause to take vengeance on King Óláfr for a great dishonour. He had broken a betrothal and struck with his glove Sigríðr, King Óláfr's mother, daughter of Skoðlar-Tósti.³⁰³ That same Sigríðr was now married to King Sveinn of the Danes, and she was very eager for King Sveinn of the Danes to do King Óláfr injury or dishonour. And in this company was Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson, who thought he had the greatest grievances against King Óláfr and his men, who had been involved in the killing of his father Hákon and put all his sons to flight from the country, and he had established himself in power in his place.

Ástriðr had got eleven ships for King Óláfr, and that force was to accompany the king until he got past Denmark. And the main reason why Búrizleifr and Ástriðr were so helpful to King Óláfr was that Geila, to whom Óláfr had been married when he was in Vinðland, was King Búrizleifr's daughter and Ástriðr's sister.³⁰⁴ Óláfr Tryggvason [148] had seventy-one ships altogether, as Halldórr ókristni (Unchristian) says:³⁰⁵

³⁰² Sveinn's father, Haraldr Gormsson, had seized power in Norway in alliance with Jarl Hákon, after the death in battle of King Haraldr gráfeldr (976). Óláfr Tryggvason established himself as king on the death of Jarl Hákon (996).

³⁰³ Oddr (120) relates Óláfr Tryggvason's breach of his betrothal to the pagan Sigríðr (mother of King Óláfr of Sweden); on her refusal to accept Christianity he slaps her face with his glove in a rage. See also *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* I 310). The words *með glófa sínum Sigríði* occur only in the A version of *Fagrskinna*.

³⁰⁴ Óláfr's marriage to Geila during his early Viking adventures is mentioned only briefly in *Fagrskinna*, but Oddr's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, in which she is called Geira, gives a probably fictitious account of the marriage and of Geira's death three years later (Oddr 31–36; more briefly *Hkr* I 253, 263).

³⁰⁵ Nothing is known of the poet Halldórr ókristni, other than the verses cited in the kings' sagas, four of them in *Fagrskinna*; some or all of these belong to a poem in honour of Jarl Eiríkr, to which Snorri refers (*Hkr* I, 349); Oddr calls it a *flokkr* (Oddr 232). This verse supports the timing of the battle during Óláfr's return from Vinðland (*sunnan*), rather than on his way south as Adam and *Ágrip* assert, and is the source for the statement in the prose that Óláfr commanded 71 ships. This is contradicted in other sources; *Historia Norvegiae* assigns the 71 ships to Óláfr's opponents, and according to Theodoricus (18), 'it is said that with only eleven ships he engaged in battle against seventy'. *Fsk* is vague about the size of the *óvigr herr* 'invincible army' opposing Óláfr, although he is still overwhelmed by force of numbers, presumably because the actual battle involves only the small number of ships lured into Sigvaldi's trap.

105. From the south one and seventy
 ships steered the king of Eynir;³⁰⁶
 the splendid staff of sea-horses³⁰⁷
 his sword in battle reddened,
 when the jarl³⁰⁸ had summoned
 sail-top-liquid's reindeer³⁰⁹
 to war—peace among people
 fell apart—with Skánungar.³¹⁰
- Eiríksflokkur* 2
Hkr I 352
 Oddr 198
ÓTM II 251

These leaders had an invincible army, and they lay in a certain harbour on the side of the island facing the mainland, and King Óláfr's ships sailed past on the outer side, while the leaders were ashore on the island and looked on as the fleet sailed from the east. They saw that the small ships were sailing in front. Now they saw one particularly large and splendid ship.

Then King Sveinn said, 'Let us go to our ships at once; there is Ormr inn langi sailing from the east now.'

Then Jarl Eiríkr replied, 'Let us wait yet, they have more large ships than Ormr inn langi.'

And so it was. That ship was owned by Styrkár from Gimsar. Then they saw yet another ship, [149] a large and well-equipped ship with figureheads.

Then said King Sveinn, 'Now Ormr inn langi must be coming here; let us not be too slow to oppose them.'

Then answered Jarl Eiríkr, 'That will still not be Ormr inn langi; not many of their big ships have come yet, but there will be plenty of them.'

It was as the jarl said. Several ships went past them before a ship with a striped sail sailed by. It was a *skeið*, much bigger than the other ships that had sailed past.

When King Sveinn saw that that ship had no figureheads, he stood up and said, laughing:

³⁰⁶ *Eynir* (*MSS Ona*, 'Oina') *konungr*: 'king of the Eynafylki people', i.e. of Norway, which could be represented in kennings by any one of its districts.

³⁰⁷ *umviggs meiðr*: 'staff (i.e. man) of the sea-horse (i.e. ship)', sailor.

³⁰⁸ The jarl may be Eiríkr, who is referred to by Halldórr in other poems as 'jarl' without further specification; but Snorri assumes it to be jarl Sigvaldi (*Hkr* I 353), perhaps understanding the words *jarl Skánunga* together.

³⁰⁹ *húnlagar hreinir*: 'reindeer of water of the sail-top (the sea)', ships.

³¹⁰ *Skánungar*: 'people of Skáni', Danes.

‘Óláfr Tryggvason is afraid now; he dare not sail with heads on his *dragon-ship*; let us go and attack as fiercely as we can.’

Then Jarl Eiríkr replied, ‘That, sire, is not King Óláfr. I recognise the ship—I have often seen it—it is owned by Erlingr Skjálgsson,³¹¹ and it is better if we steer round his stern to this battle. Such fine men are on board there that we will certainly know it if we meet Óláfr Tryggvason. Better for us is a gap in his fleet than this ship, equipped as it is.’³¹²

Then said King Óláfr of the Swedes, ‘We should not hesitate to advance into battle against Óláfr, though he has a great ship. It will be a shame and a disgrace, and it will be heard of in every land, if we lie here with our invincible army while he sails by outside on the main sea passage.’

Then Jarl Eiríkr replied, ‘Sire, let that ship sail by; I will tell you the good news that Óláfr Tryggvason will not have sailed past us, and on this day we will have the chance to fight against him. There are many leaders here now, and I expect that in such a battle we will all have plenty to do before we part.’

Then they said again, as a big ship advanced:

‘That must be Ormr inn langi, and Jarl Eiríkr,’ the Danes said, ‘doesn’t want to fight and avenge his father, if he’s not willing to do it now.’

The jarl answered, very angry, and said that it was more than likely that [150] the Danes would not be less reluctant to fight than he or his men. Then they had not long to wait before three ships came sailing, one much the biggest, and it had a gilded dragon’s head. Then everyone said that the jarl had spoken the truth, ‘and now here comes Ormr inn langi.’

Jarl Eiríkr replied, ‘That is not Ormr inn langi,’ and yet he told them to head towards it if they liked. Then Jarl Sigvaldi took his ship and rowed out to the ships; he had a white shield raised.³¹³ They lowered the sails and waited. The big ship was the Trana (Crane), which was commanded by Þorkell nefja, the king’s kinsman.³¹⁴ They asked Sigvaldi what the news was.

³¹¹ Erlingr Skjálgsson was Óláfr Tryggvason’s brother-in-law (p. 114).

³¹² That is, without dragons’ heads.

³¹³ Showing a white shield was a token of peaceful intentions.

³¹⁴ Þorkell nefja was Óláfr Tryggvason’s half-brother, according to *Heimskringla* (*Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, ch. 52). Oddr Snorrason (120) and *Hkr* (I 319) say that Óláfr

He told them the news about King Sveinn of the Danes, ‘which it is urgent for Óláfr Tryggvason to know; he needs to beware.’

Then Þorkell and the others allowed their ships to drift and wait. Next King Sveinn and the others saw four ships sailing, one much bigger than the others, and on it were dragons’ heads which looked like pure gold.

Then everyone said at once, ‘What an amazingly large ship is Ormr inn langi! There can be no *longship* as beautiful as that in the world, and it is a magnificent thing to have such a treasure built.’

Then said King Sveinn of the Danes, ‘Ormr inn langi will carry me high. I shall steer it this evening before the sun goes down,’ and he commanded his troop to make ready.

Then Jarl Eiríkr said so that few men heard him, ‘Even if Óláfr Tryggvason had no bigger ship than the one that can be seen now, King Sveinn will never steer this ship with the help of the Danish army alone.’

Sigvaldi, as he saw where the ships were sailing, told Þorkell nefja to row the Ormr in close to the island, and said that the wind was in a better quarter for them to sail in the sea and keep close to land with large ships and a small breeze. They did so, drew these four close to the island, because they saw some of their ships rowing in to the island and suspected that something was going on, sailed close to the wind near the island, lowered sail and took to the oars. That big ship was called Ormr inn skammi (the Short Serpent).³¹⁵ Then the chieftains saw [151] three very large ships sailing, and a fourth last of all.

Then said Jarl Eiríkr to King Sveinn and to King Óláfr of the Swedes, ‘Now get up and go to the ships; I will not deny now that Ormr inn langi is sailing by, and there you will now meet Óláfr Tryggvason.’

Then they were all silent, and great terror set in at this, and many a man there feared for his life.

Óláfr Tryggvason saw where his men had headed in to the island

had the Trana (Trani in some MSS) built; according to *Hkr* it was a *snekkja* with thirty rowing-benches.

³¹⁵ According to Oddr Snorrason, this was the second of three ships—Trana, Ormr inn skammi and Ormr inn langi—that Óláfr had built (Oddr 137), but *Hkr* relates that he acquired it from a farmer/magician in Hálogaland (*Hkr* I 327); this narrative may have come from Gunnlaugr Leifsson’s lost saga of King Óláfr.

and felt sure that he saw that they must have heard some news, and he turned these ships as well in to the island, and they lowered sail. Sigvaldi steered his ship in along the shore of the island towards the kings' troop as they were coming out. Because of this, Stefnir composed this about Sigvaldi:³¹⁶

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 106. I shall not name—
though near I aim:
downward bends
the dastard's nose—
the one who lured
King Sveinn from his land,
and drew Tryggvason
into a trap. | Oddr 194–95
ÓTM II 305 |
|---|---------------------------|

King Sveinn of the Danes and King Óláfr of the Swedes and Jarl Eiríkr had made an agreement among themselves that if they brought down Óláfr Tryggvason, the one most nearly responsible should take possession of his ship and all the booty that was gained in the battle, but the realm of the king of Norway they should all share three ways.

Then King Óláfr and his men saw that they were betrayed, and that all the sea close to them was carpeted with warships, while King Óláfr [152] had a small force, as Hallfrøðr says, when the fleet had sailed away from him:³¹⁷

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 107. There, I think, too much missed—
many men went fleeing—
the prince, battle's promoter, | Óláfsdrápa 3
Hkr I 358
Oddr 206 |
|---|---------------------------------------|

³¹⁶ This *fornyrðislag* verse, attributed to the Icelandic poet Stefnir Þorgilsson, is found in Oddr Snorrason's saga, which also quotes a Latin version of the verse said to have been composed by Oddr. *Heimskringla* does not cite the verse but, like Oddr's saga, gives a clearer account of Sigvaldi's treachery. He is sent by the alliance against Óláfr to lure him from Vinðland, assuring him that there is no army lying in wait for him. *Fagrskinna* presents him less ambiguously as a subordinate of King Sveinn of Denmark, and Skúli Þorsteinsson's verse (below) associates him with Eiríkr's force. The allusion in the verse to Sigvaldi's cheating Sveinn into leaving his country is to the story recorded in chapter 19 above of Sigvaldi feigning sickness in order to capture King Sveinn and carry him off to an enforced settlement with the Wends.

³¹⁷ Verses 107–08, 113 and 115–20 are believed to belong to the *efidrápa* 'memorial lay' composed by Hallfrøðr after the king's death, though according to *Hallfrøðar saga* he also composed another poem in Óláfr's honour while he was alive.

support of men of Þrándheimr.
 The brave king battled with
 bold kings, two, alone—
 splendid it is to speak of
 such deeds—and a jarl, thirdly.

ÓTM II 260–61

Then each of the three leaders sailed to his station, King Sveinn of the Danes with his force, King Óláfr of the Swedes with the Swedish army; in the third place Jarl Eiríkr made his troop ready.

Then a wise man, Þorkell dyrðill, said to King Óláfr, ‘There is an overwhelming force, sire, to fight against here; let us hoist up our sails and put out to sea to our troops. It is not cowardly for any man to know the limits of his powers.’

Then King Óláfr answered loudly, ‘Lay the ships side by side and tie them, let men arm themselves and draw swords. My men must not think of flight.’

These words Hallfróðr attested in this way:

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| 108. | The speech shall be told that, say men,
strong in deeds, the fir-tree
of enmity’s mail-coat ³¹⁸ made to
men in the weapons’ quarrel. ³¹⁹ | Óláfsdrápa 2
Hkr I 356
Oddr 207
ÓTM II 259–60 |
| [153] | The ender of enemies’ courage ³²⁰
urged not his men to think—
the country’s comrade’s ³²¹ words of
courage live on—of flight. | |

Then Óláfr Tryggvason asked his men, ‘Who is the commander of this troop which lies nearest to us?’

They answered, ‘We think it is King Sveinn of the Danes.’

Then said King Óláfr, ‘We shall not be afraid of that troop, for the Danes have never had victory in battle when they fought on ships against Norwegians.’ Again King Óláfr asked, ‘Who are those that lie further out, and have many ships?’

He was told that King Óláfr of the Swedes was there.

King Óláfr said, ‘We need not fear the Swedes, the horse-eaters.

³¹⁸ *dolga fangs berr*: ‘the fir-tree (i.e. man) of the tunic of hostility (i.e. mailcoat), warrior.

³¹⁹ *vápna senna*: ‘quarrel of weapons’, battle.

³²⁰ *hertryggðar hnekkir*: ‘thwarter of army’s confidence’, successful military leader.

³²¹ *sessi þjóðar*: ‘seat-mate (i.e. friend) of the people’, king.

They would be happier licking out their sacrificial bowls than coming aboard Ormr inn langi in the face of your weapons.³²² Then Óláfr Tryggvason asked further, 'Whose are those big ships lying out there beyond the fleet?'

He was told that that was Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson with Járnbardinn, which was the biggest of all ships.

Then said King Óláfr, 'They have drawn up noble men against us in great force, and from this troop we can expect a hard battle. They are Norwegians like us, and have often seen bloody swords and many clashes of weapons, and they will think their meeting with us is fitting; and so it is.'

These four chieftains, two kings and two jarls, [154] engaged in battle against Óláfr Tryggvason, and little is said of Sigvaldi in connection with the battle, and yet Skúli Þorsteinsson says in his *flokkr* that Sigvaldi was there.³²³

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 109. I followed the Frisians' | <i>Hkr</i> I 358 |
| foc ³²⁴ —young, where spears sounded, | Oddr 210 |
| I won renown: men notice | <i>ÓTM</i> II 264 |
| now I grow old—and Sigvaldi. | |
| where to meet the member | |
| of metal-thing ³²⁵ in helmets' | |
| clash, ³²⁶ south off Svǫldr's mouth ³²⁷ | |
| we carried the reddened wound-leek. ³²⁸ | |

³²² These are conventional gibes at the stereotypically pagan Swedes. A verse in *Hallfredar saga* includes a similar taunt (*Hallfredar saga*, 188):

The boastful carrion-maker's Baldr
less bother would find it,
so I guess, to lick the inside
of his sacrifice vessel.

³²³ Skúli Þorsteinsson was an Icelandic poet, grandson of Egill Skalla-Grímsson. *Egils saga* ends with a reference to his presence at Svǫldr: 'He was one of Jarl Eiríkr's forecastle-men on Járnbardinn when King Óláfr Tryggvason fell' (*Egils saga*, 300). Little is known of him elsewhere, and of his poetry only this verse and a number of half-verses preserved in *Snorra Edda* survive, most of them probably belonging to the *flokkr* (loosely constructed poem, or series of verses) referred to here, about the poet's deeds.

³²⁴ *Frisa dolgr* 'enemy of Frisians' is presumably Eiríkr, as Snorri asserts (*Hkr* I 358).

³²⁵ *matir malmþings*: 'one who attends the metal (i.e. weapons) parliament (i.e. battle)', warrior; Óláfr Tryggvason.

³²⁶ *dynr hjalma*: 'noise of helmets', battle.

³²⁷ *Svǫldrar mynni* 'mouth' suggests that Svǫldr may actually have been a river; see note 301 above.

³²⁸ *sárlaukr*: 'wound-leek', sword.

This battle was very fierce and deadly; the Danes suffered heaviest losses because they were closest to the Norwegians. They did not stand fast, and sailed out of range, and this army acted as Óláfr Tryggvason said—with no honour at all—but none the less the battle was hard and long, a great number falling on both sides but most from the Swedes, and it reached the point where Óláfr sven-ski saw it as the best plan for himself and his troop to be as far away as possible, and he let the oars push backwards against the oar-loops,³²⁹ while Jarl Eiríkr lay broadside on. King Óláfr Tryggvason had placed Ormr inn langi between Ormr inn skammi and the Trana, and the smallest ships outermost. But Jarl Eiríkr had those that were disabled cut free, [155] and struck at those that remained. Now as King Óláfr's smaller ships were cleared of men, they jumped away and climbed up onto the bigger ships. As a result of this there was great loss of men in both forces. But as people fell from Jarl Eiríkr's ships, they were replaced by others, no fewer, from the Swedes and the Danes, but none replaced those who fell from King Óláfr's side. Then all his ships were stripped of men except for Ormr inn langi, because it had the highest sides and was best manned, and while there were men available they had boarded it, and it had kept up its full complement of men even though some had died. And when Ormr inn skammi and the Trana were emptied Eiríkr had them cut away, and then Járnbardinn was laid broadside-on to Ormr inn langi, as Halldórr ókristni says:

110. A year since, the Long Serpent
suffered a harsh trial.

Blood-reeds³³⁰ beat each other;
battered were moons of ship's prow,³³¹

when the god of the armour-
ogre³³² laid high-sided

Barði—the jarl did battle³³³

by the isle—at side of Fáfnir.³³⁴

Eiríksflokkur 3

Hkr I 360–61

Oddr 222, 252

ÓTM II 273

³²⁹ i.e. turned to row away.

³³⁰ *reyrr dreyra*: 'reed of blood', sword.

³³¹ *tungl tingle tangar*: 'moons of tongs of the prow-ornament (i.e. the prow)', shields, which were fastened along the sides of ships.

³³² *bryntrolls reginn*: 'power (god) of the troll of the coat of mail (i.e. axe)', warrior.

³³³ *hjalms hrið*: 'storm of the helmet', battle.

³³⁴ *Fáfnir*: the legendary dragon killed by Sigurðr, referring here to Ormr inn langi.

- [156] 111. Sharp swords were set moving;³³⁵ *Eiríksflokkur* 4
 men cut up peace for long, *Hkr* I 360
 when gilded spears gave tongue Oddr 222–23, 253
 against the Long Serpent. *ÓTM* II 272
 Swedish men, they said, and
 strife-bushes³³⁶ of Denmark
 to the keen leg-cutter's
 quarrel³³⁷ followed him³³⁸ southwards.
112. I think the war without mercy— *Eiríksflokkur* 5
 men brought down the ruler, Oddr 223
 the jarl conquered fjord-country— *ÓTM* II 282
 and the courageous man self-unsparing,
 when you, war-strong, brought Barði
 broadside to the Long Serpent
 on fjord-stone's path;³³⁹ the stallion
 of Sif³⁴⁰ did not go hungry.

[157] This battle was so fierce, first because of the energetic attack, and yet especially because of the defence, when ships attacked the Ormr from all directions, but those who defended themselves opposed them so strongly that they climbed down from the ship's sides and into the sea and sank down with their weapons and took no more heed than if they were fighting on land and wanted to keep on advancing.³⁴¹ So said Hallfrøðr:

113. Sank down from the Serpent *Óláfsdrápa* 13
 those in spear-hatred³⁴² wounded; *Hkr* I 361–62
 strivers of Heðinn's ring-shirt,³⁴³ Oddr 224, 253
 they spared not each other. *ÓTM* II 274
 Long will the long serpent

³³⁵ *snarpra sverða gangr*: 'activity of sharp swords', battle.

³³⁶ *dolgs runnr*: 'bush of strife', warrior.

³³⁷ *leggbita senna*: 'quarrel of the leg-biter (i.e. sword)', battle.

³³⁸ i.e. Jarl Eiríkr.

³³⁹ *ffarðmýlis trøð*: 'path of the fjord-lump (i.e. rock in the fjord)', sea.

³⁴⁰ *Sifjar sóti*: 'the horse of Sif (goddess, giantess)', wolf. Troll-women were said to ride on wolves. In some MSS of Oddr's saga and later texts, the reading is *sævar sóti*, 'horse of the sea', i.e. a ship, referring to either Ormr inn langi or Járnbardinn.

³⁴¹ The suggestion that the defenders fought so furiously that they stepped overboard as if they were fighting on land is presumably an over-literal interpretation of Hallfrøðr's following verse.

³⁴² *naddfárs bød*: 'battle of spike-hatred', battle.

³⁴³ *verkandi Heðins serkjar baugs*: 'worker of Heðinn's (a legendary king) shirt of the ring (i.e. coat of mail)', warrior.

lack such great warriors,
though a great king guides it
gliding with the army.

Then fell first the men in the middle of the ship, where the sides were lowest, while forward around the prow and at the back in front of the raised decking men held out longest. When Jarl Eiríkr saw that the Ormr was empty *amidships*, he went on board with fourteen men, and when Úlfr inn rauði (the Red) and the other men in the prow saw that, [158] they turned back from the prow and attacked so fiercely where the jarl was that the jarl had to retreat back onto his ship, and when he got onto the Barði, the jarl urged his men to attack boldly, and they boarded a second time with a large troop. Then Úlfr and all the other men from the prow had come to the raised after-deck, and the ship was completely cleared forward of that. Then Jarl Eiríkr's troop attacked that of King Óláfr from all sides, as Halldórr ókristni says:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 114. The merry lord commanded
his men useful in warfare;
back over rowing-benches
the band sprang with Óláfr,
when they had hemmed in
the hardy king with warships
of the sea-fire's spoiler; ³⁴⁴
the slayer of Wends ³⁴⁵ was in battle. ³⁴⁶ | <i>Eiríksflokkur</i> 6
<i>Hkr</i> I 365
Oddr 228–29, 254–55
<i>ÓTM</i> II 283–84 |
|--|---|

Then Jarl Eiríkr forced his way with his men back in front of the raised after-deck, and there was fierce resistance there. King Óláfr had been all day on the raised after-deck of the Ormr. He had a gilded shield and helmet, and a heavy ringed mailcoat, so strong that nothing made any impression on it, although it is said that there was no lack of weapons attacking the after-deck, for everyone recognised the king because his weapons were easily identifiable, and he was standing high on the after-deck. [159] And beside the king stood his *marshal* Kolbjörn, equipped with weapons similar to the king's.

³⁴⁴ *hallandi hafvita*: 'destroyer (by giving away) of sea-beacon (i.e. gold)', generous ruler (here, Jarl Eiríkr). Snorri explains that gold is called 'fire of the sea' because it was used to light the hall of the sea-god Ægir (*Skáldsk* I 40–41).

³⁴⁵ *Vinda myrðir*: killer of Wends, Óláfr.

³⁴⁶ *vápnreið*: 'wielding of weapons', battle.

Now the battle turned out as was likely when forces brave on both sides had encountered, that those who were less numerous lost, and when all King Óláfr's troop had fallen, he himself jumped overboard with his shield raised up over his head, and so did the marshal Kolbjörn, but his shield got under him in the sea and he could not get underwater, and those men who were on small ships caught him, thinking that it was the king himself. He got quarter from the jarl, however. And after that those who were still alive all jumped overboard, although most were wounded, and those who received quarter were captured while swimming; they were Þorkell nefja, Karlshöfuð and Þorsteinn and Einarr þambarskelfir.³⁴⁷

And after the battle was over Jarl Eiríkr took possession of Ormr inn langi and Óláfr's other ships and the weapons of many men who had carried them bravely till their dying day. Hallfrøðr has borne witness that Þorkell nefja fled at the point where all King Óláfr's ships were cleared:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 115. The lessener of limb-metal ³⁴⁸ | Óláfsdrápa 16 |
| looked on the Crane floating, | Hkr I 366 |
| and both Serpents, deserted— | Oddr 214–15, 249 |
| spears in war, glad, he reddened— | ÓTM II 288 |
| before fight-bold Þórketill, ³⁴⁹ | |
| fierce-hearted in the mighty | |
| warfare on the rope-wolf, ³⁵⁰ | |
| the wise man, fled swimming. | |

[160] This battle is the most famous there has ever been in the northern lands, because of what has been told of the brave defence,

³⁴⁷ MS *þambarskelfir*, emended according to *Heimskringla* and other texts. *Heimskringla*, following Oddr's saga, includes a colourful anecdote in which the cutting of the bowstring of Einarr, the master-archer, signals Óláfr's downfall:

'What broke so loudly there?' Einarr answered, 'Norway, out of your hands, King.'

The story may be inspired by a misinterpretation of the element *þemb* 'belly', which could also mean 'bowstring', in the nickname *þambarskelfir*. As recorded here, Einarr survives the battle to become a significant figure in the histories of Óláfr Haraldsson and his successors.

³⁴⁸ *ógræðir armgjóts*: 'Diminisher of arm-metal (i.e. arm-rings of silver and gold)', generous man.

³⁴⁹ *Þórketill*: archaic form of Þorkell, its trisyllabic form necessary to preserve syllable quantity of the verse. The use of such archaic forms tends to confirm the authentic age of the verse, though they are common enough to be imitated by later poets.

³⁵⁰ *snærvitnir*: 'wolf of ropes', ship.

next because of the attack and the victory, in which the ship that no man expected could be attacked with weapons was overcome in the open sea, and yet most of all because such a leader fell, who was the most famous then in the Scandinavian lands. People had cared so much about showing affection in all discourse with King Óláfr that most people would not hear of his having fallen, but said that he was in Vinðland or southern Europe, and many stories are told about that, but his friends feared that it was untrue, and that is proclaimed by Hallfrøðr vandræðaskáld, that man who had so greatly loved the king that men say that after the king's death he suffered a sickness from grief which stayed with him till his dying day.³⁵¹ This witness Hallfrøðr bore:

116. Whether I must laud living
or lifeless the sater
of seagulls of the sound of
brightness of the beast of Heiti
in battle,³⁵² I know not,
since both tales men are telling
as truth—the king is wounded
in either case—news of him
is not easily come by.

Óláfsdrápa 20
Hkr I 368
Oddr 233, 256 (1st half)
ÓTM II 290

[161] 117. The user of the spear-ogress³⁵³
acted rightly, who of the destiny
of the trusty son of Tryggvi
told that the king³⁵⁴ was living.
They say Óláfr came safely
from the storm of weapons,³⁵⁵
telling far from truthful
tales—much worse the case is.

Óláfsdrápa 22
Hkr I 368–69
ÓTM II 292–93

³⁵¹ Legends of Óláfr's survival and possible future return to Norway are widespread, and sprang up almost immediately after the battle, as the reference in Hallfrøðr's verse testifies. According to Theodoricus (18), 'some say that the king then escaped from there in a skiff, and made his way to foreign parts to seek salvation for his soul.' Oddr Snorrason's saga records a tradition that he ended his life as a monk in Syria or Greece. The author of *Fagrskinna*, more sceptically, sees the rumours as evidence of the sense of loss suffered by the king's followers.

³⁵² *hungrdeyfir dynsæðinga dýrbliks Heita*: 'sater of the hunger of the seagulls (i.e. ravens) of the *din* (i.e. battle) of brightness (i.e. shining shields) of Heiti's beast (i.e. ship)', warrior, who feeds ravens by killing on the battlefield. This kenning has seven elements.

³⁵³ *árr oddflags*: 'messenger, user of the giantess of the spear (i.e. axe)', warrior, man.

³⁵⁴ *lofða gramr*: 'lord of men', king.

³⁵⁵ *él stála*: 'storm of (steel) weapons', battle.

And further he said this:

118. It would not, as warriors
 the warlike king assaulted,
 have been destined—I deal in
 drink of land-shoulder people³⁵⁶—
 for the excellent arm-icicle's
 owner³⁵⁷ to come safely—
 improbable I think what people
 suppose—from such a battle.
- Óláfsdrápa* 23
Hkr I 369
ÓTM II 293

[162] And further he said:

119. Some to the wealth-essayer³⁵⁸
 speak of the king being wounded,
 or from the clashing weapons
 east away escaping.
 Now comes a true account
 of the king's death, northwards
 from the great warfare; wavering
 words of men I heed little.
- Óláfsdrápa* 24
Hkr I 369–70
ÓTM II 293

And further he said:

120. I think done to death now
 the dauntless king of Norway;
 the prince has passed onwards,
 the proud troop-leader fallen.
 The good king's fall has finished,
 for no few men, well-being;
 all peace destroyed by the steadfast
 son of Tryggvi's downfall.
- Óláfsdrápa* 25

Stef (lines 7–8):
Hallfreðar saga 194,
 Oddr 234

³⁵⁶ *lið landherðar lýða*: 'strong drink of land-shoulder (i.e. mountain) people (i.e. giants)', poetry. An allusion to the myth in which the mead of poetry, brewed by dwarves and stored by giants, was stolen by the god Óðinn and bestowed on earthly poets (*Skáldsk* I 3–5). *lið* is the reading of *Hkr* and *ÓTM* where *Fsk* has *lifi*.

³⁵⁷ *mundjökuls stýrir*: 'controller of ice of the hand (shining metal, i.e. rings)', wealthy, generous lord.

³⁵⁸ *auðar kennir*: 'one who experiences wealth', man; here, the poet, Hallfróðr.

CHAPTER 25

[163] After the battle, before the leaders parted, they divided the realm of Norway among them. Jarl Eiríkr kept undivided the third of the country which fell to his share, but King Sveinn gave Eiríkr some part of the realm of Norway which he had, and yet King Sveinn kept within his control all the Vík from the east to Líðendisnes. So said Þórðr Kolbeinsson:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 121. But the land bowed after the
battle, from northern Veiga
to Agðir, and wider—word
of the king is troublesome.
In the south King Sveinn was
said to be dead; empty—
few are spared the ill fates
of fellow men—his dwellings. | <i>Eiríksdrápa</i> 6 (1st half)
<i>Hkr</i> I 371
<i>Skáldsk</i> I 86 (1st half)
<i>ÓTM</i> II 300
<i>Eiríksdrápa</i> 7 (2nd half)
<i>Hkr</i> I 371
<i>ÓTM</i> II 300 |
|--|--|

[164] King Óláfr svenski received a large domain in this sharing out of property, over all of Upplönd and somewhat from Þrándheimr, and he established Jarl Sveinn Hákonarson there in charge of the land, and he had to pay tribute from it to King Óláfr inn svenski. The brothers Eiríkr and Sveinn then went to Norway, and Eiríkr had Ormr inn langi, as Halldórr ókristni says:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 122. The king helmet-covered
was carried by Ormr inn langi
to the mighty sword's meeting; ³⁵⁹
men adorned the warship.
In the south the glad jarl seized
the Serpent in Gunnr's din; ³⁶⁰
Hemingr's high-born brother ³⁶¹
had to redden blades before that. | <i>Eiríksflokk</i> 8
<i>Hkr</i> I 370
<i>ÓTM</i> II 297–98 |
|--|--|

³⁵⁹ *hrings þing*: 'meeting of the sword', battle. *Hringr* 'ring' referred to a ring in the hilt of particularly valuable swords, and by metonymy, was used of the sword itself.

³⁶⁰ *Gunnar gýr*: 'din of Gunnr (valkyrie)', battle.

³⁶¹ *Hemingr bróðir*: Eiríkr. Hemingr was named in chapter 22 (p. 130) as a son of Jarl Hákon.

CHAPTER 26

Then Eiríkr made Norway subject to himself, as was said before, and he and his brother were both jarls, but Eiríkr was the more powerful. He was married to Gyða, daughter of King Sveinn of the Danes. Their son was Hákon. Eiríkr was a great warrior throughout his long and glorious life, and most blessed with victory of all men. He performed the famous deed of killing Tíðenda-Skopti, as was written before,³⁶² and on a second occasion he [165] fought in the east in Gautland and raided extensively there, killed many people and took some captive and had them taken to ships, and a great deal of money was paid for their release. His third fight was against the Jómsvíkingar, the fourth in Eyrarsund, where he cleared four ships of the Danes. His fifth battle he fought against Vikings south at Staurr;³⁶³ he killed many and drove others into the sea. Next he went east into Garðaríki against Valdamarr gamli and raided widely throughout his kingdom. He stormed Aldeigjuborg and took a great deal of property there, and further still he proceeded east into Garðar raiding everywhere, burned towns and fortresses, while the *bændr* ran with what they could carry into the forests. Further, he captured three Viking warships within his territory in the Baltic, killed all the crews and took the ships and all their goods. Next he went ashore on Eystra-Gautland and burned many villages there, returning to the sea with a great deal of booty. From there he went east raiding all around Sýslur. Next, he joined battle against Óláfr Tryggvason. Eiríkr made a shore raid on Skáni and seized a great deal of property there, and before he returned to his ships he had a great battle against the local people and was victorious. Next he seized four trading ships from merchants off Yggjustaðir; some jumped overboard, but some were captured and bound, while the jarl and his men shared out their clothes. All these battles were enumerated by Eyjúlfr dáðaskáld when he composed about Eiríkr the poem which is called *Bandadrápa* (Lay of the Gods).³⁶⁴

At that time Eiríkr raided mostly over Garðaríki in the realm of

³⁶² See chapter 22 (p. 109).

³⁶³ This place-name occurs in Eyjúlfr dáðaskáld's *Bandadrápa* (see v. 95); Snorri refers to it in the context of Eiríkr's raids in Vinðland (*Hkr* I 338). It has been tentatively identified as Staver, on the (now German) island of Fehmarn.

³⁶⁴ See verse 95.

King Valdamarr, while Óláfr Tryggvason was king in Norway, and he did that out of vengeance and dislike of King Óláfr and enmity after the death of his father Hákon.

These jarls had had themselves baptised, and remained Christian, but they forced no man to Christianity, but allowed each to do [166] as he wished, and in their day Christianity was greatly harmed, so that throughout Upplönd and in over Þrándheimr almost everything was heathen, though Christianity was maintained along the coast.

Eiríkr did not have the marketplace at Niðaróss maintained, but he had his residence at Hlaðir as it had been when Jarl Hákon was alive. And Eiríkr stayed there most often when he was in Þrándheimr, and he had a marketplace established in Steinker and had dues and taxes brought to him wherever he was staying. There was good peace at this time and very prosperous seasons. The jarls maintained the laws well and were stern in punishing offences. They married their sister Bergljót to Einarr þambarskelfir, and he was fully in their confidence. All the *landed men* were friends of Jarl Eiríkr except Erlingr Skjálgrsson. So said Þórðr Kolbeinsson:

123. I know that, other than Erlingr,
early on most hersir—the Týr
of the light of the ship's land³⁶⁵
I laud—to jarls were friendly.

Eiríksdrápa 6
Hkr I 371
ÓTM II 300

When Jarl Eiríkr was ruling Norway, King Sveinn of the Danes died of a sickness west in England, and he had already conquered much of England from the rule of King Aðalráðr, who reigned in England at that time. In Denmark a young chieftain called Knútr, son of King Sveinn, took over the rule of the kingdom. It was in his mind what his father had done, and a few years after his father's death he prepared a great army to go west from Denmark [167] to England, and he sent word to ask his brother-in-law Jarl Eiríkr to go with him, and expected to have great support from him, because Knútr was young then, no older than thirteen, and Jarl Eiríkr was an experienced warrior of tested intelligence and fortune.

Jarl Eiríkr set out west from Norway to England and appointed his twelve-year-old son Hákon to look after the country, dividing the

³⁶⁵ *farlands fasta Týr*: 'Týr (god) of the fire of the ship's land (sea)', Týr of gold, generous man.

domain in half with Sveinn, while he went to join King Knútr. Together they made raids in many parts of England and fought many battles, as Þórðr Kolbeinsson says in the poem he composed about Jarl Eiríkr, and there is agreement between him and Óttarr svarti (the Black), where he reckons in *Knútsdrápa* (the Lay of Knútr) how many battles they fought before England was won.³⁶⁶

Jarl Eiríkr met his end in England when he had come back from Rome, and died of loss of blood having earlier had his uvula cut out.³⁶⁷ At that time Sveinn and Hákon, both jarls, were ruling Norway, and the situation in the realm was the same as before.

CHAPTER 27

A son of Haraldr inn hárfagri was Björn, father of Guðrøðr, father of Haraldr grenski, who was married to Ásta, daughter of Guðbrandr kúla (Lump). Their son was Óláfr digri (the Fat), who left the country in his childhood, and with him went his foster-father Hrani. Óláfr fought for the first time in the east by Sótasker, and afterwards he went into the Baltic and fought in the east on Eysýsla and won there. He fought for the third time east in Finland and got the better of them there. He fought for the fourth time in Suðrvík in Denmark and won, the fifth time in Kinnlimafjörðr against an army

³⁶⁶ Óttarr svarti was an Icelandic poet who composed for King Óláfr Haraldsson (the Saint) as well as for Jarl Eiríkr. Eleven verses believed to belong to *Knútsdrápa* are preserved in *Knýtlinga saga*.

³⁶⁷ The information that Eiríkr intended a pilgrimage to Rome, and died of removal of the uvula, may be derived from Sæmundr inn fróði, since it is mentioned in *Nóregs konunga tal* 27 (*Skj B I* 579):

Þá vas úfr
Eireks skorinn,
áðr rómfr
ræsir hæfi,
ok blóðrös
tíl bana leiddi
vitran jarl
vestr með Englum.

[Then Eiríkr's uvula was cut before the ruler began his journey to Rome, and the flow of blood caused the wise jarl's death west among the English.]

The same cause of death is given in *Agr* (24), Theod (19), *Knýt* (120), *ÓTM* (II 317); Snorri says only that Eiríkr died from loss of blood (*Hkr* II 32). For an account of this medieval operation see McDougall 1992, 58–59, 76–77. Of the sources that mention the projected pilgrimage, only *Fsk* claims that it actually took place.

of cavalry and was victorious there. Next he went west to England and fought by London bridges against the Danes, who were raiding and acting as Vikings, as the poet Sighvatr says:³⁶⁸

- [168] 124. It is so that the sixth battle—
 the swift prince offered the English
 Yggr's strife³⁶⁹—was where Óláfr
 attacked London's bridges.
 Frankish swords fought, but Vikings
 defended the ditch then.
 Some of the host had encampments
 on the Southwark flatlands.
- Vikingarvísur* 6
Hkr II 17–18
Legendary saga 46

There the Danes defended the city, while Óláfr attacked in support of King Aðalráðr, as Óttarr svarti says:³⁷⁰

125. You brought to the land, and made lord,
 land-guardian,³⁷¹ Aðalráðr;
 this the powerful protector
 of people³⁷² owed to you.
 You brought, with a fierce battle,
 back in peace Játmundr's
 kinsman³⁷³ to the country
 the king³⁷⁴ had ruled formerly.
- Hofuðlausn* 8
Hkr II 17

³⁶⁸ The Iclander Sighvatr Þórðarson, the best-known and most prolific of the poets associated with Óláfr. The information in this chapter is based ultimately on the poem by Sighvatr now called *Vikingarvísur* 'Verses about a Viking Expedition'. *Hkr* cites 14½ verses, including those cited here, from this poem, which it refers to as 'the poem in which [Sighvatr] enumerated King Óláfr's battles' (*Hkr* II 12). The insistence that Óláfr was engaged against the Danes is peculiar to *Fsk*; Snorri (*Hkr* II 12) says that he was in alliance with (the Danish Jómsvíkingr) Þorkell inn hávi Strút-Haraldsson, who according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and other texts, campaigned against the English 1009–11 and then joined forces with Ethelred (E. O. G. Turville-Petre 1951, 140–46). It has been suggested that Sighvatr's father Þórðr Sigvaldaskáld was an eyewitness to the events recorded in the verses (Poole 1993, 580). It is likely that Óláfr joined Ethelred later, while fighting in Brittany (p. 68 below), and returned with him to England. Sighvatr and Óttarr svarti no doubt exaggerate the military role of Óláfr, who was probably aged about 14 in 1009. On the *Vikingarvísur* see Fell 1981; Campbell 1949, 76–82; 1970, 4, 8–12.

³⁶⁹ *Yggs at*: 'clash of Yggr (Óðinn)', battle.

³⁷⁰ Óláfr's support of Aðalráðr (Ethelred), referred to in this verse, more properly relates to Ethelred's accession to the kingdom after the death of King Sveinn tjúguskegg in 1014 (*Hkr* II 18n.).

³⁷¹ *lávörðr*: 'guardian of land', king.

³⁷² *rekka ríni*: 'confidant, friend of men', king.

³⁷³ *Játmundar niðr*: 'kinsman of Edmund', Ethelred, father of Edmund Ironside.

³⁷⁴ *attstúðill*: (elsewhere *attstúðill*): 'pillar of a family', leader of a clan, king.

[169] Óláfr fought his seventh battle on Hringmaraheiðr, the eighth, when he won Canterbury, and then again the fight was against Danes and Wends.³⁷⁵ They were the followers of the king of the Danes, as Sighvatr says:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 126. I know that the war-wager, | <i>Vikingavísur</i> 8 |
| Wend-harmer, for the eighth time— | <i>Hkr</i> II 20 |
| he held firm at the fortress, | <i>Legendary saga</i> 54 |
| the force's guardian ³⁷⁶ —did battle. | |

The ninth battle he fought by Nýjamóða,³⁷⁷ and Sighvatr says that he was fighting against the Danes again then:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 127. Now of battles I have numbered | <i>Vikingarvísur</i> 9 |
| nine, eastern fear-raiser. ³⁷⁸ | <i>Hkr</i> II 21 |
| The Danish host died where | <i>Legendary saga</i> 56 |
| darts flew hard at Óláfr. | |

He fought his tenth battle against Vikings at Hœli,³⁷⁹ broke down a fortress there and again the Danes were in opposition. He fought his eleventh battle in Gríslupollr. From there he went west into Fetlafjörðr and fought his twelfth battle there. Then he went south and fought in Seljupollr, and there he went up into Gunnvaldsborg and took Jarl Geirfinnr captive. From there he went all the way south to Karlsáróss and raided there on both sides of the river. Then

³⁷⁵ The identification of Óláfr's enemies as Wends is based on the description of Óláfr in verse 126 as *Vindum háttir* 'dangerous to Wends', but this, of course, does not guarantee that Wends were involved in this particular battle. The second half of the verse, cited in *Hkr* (II 20), refers to the defenders of Canterbury as *portgreifar*, from the Old English word *portgerefa* 'town reeve', and as *Partar*, apparently a term for the English used also by Einar Skúlason (Fell 1981, 117; *LP* 451).

³⁷⁶ *verðungar vörðr*: 'guardian of the paid troop', king.

³⁷⁷ *Nýjamóða*: an unknown place, probably in England. The name occurs in the first half of Sighvatr's verse, of which *Fsk* cites only the second half (v. 127). The omitted first half-verse also makes clear that Óláfr was fighting against the English (*vann ungr konungr Englum/ótrauðr skarar rauðar*); the reference in the verse cited here to 'Danes' falling could be to those Óláfr was allied with, rather than the enemy.

³⁷⁸ *austan ógnvaldr*: 'causer of terror, battle', warrior, from the east (i.e. Norway); but Finnur Jónsson takes *austan* to refer to the Danish army (*Skj* B I 215).

³⁷⁹ *Hkr* (II 22, 23) has *á Hólunum*, supported by *á Hóli* in a verse by Sighvatr. This has been identified as Dol in Brittany, based on a reference by William of Jumièges to Olaf, king of the Northmen, who fought as a mercenary for Richard II of Normandy against Odo, Count of Chartres c. 1013 (E. O. G. Turville-Petre 1951, 143; Price 1989, 370–71).

he wanted [170] to go out to the Straits of Gibraltar³⁸⁰ and waited for a long time but did not get a fair wind, and received there a revelation that God did not wish him to go further south, but that he should rather go north to Norway, his ancestral land, and it said that he was to be king there for ever. He did so, turned back his force and came to Poitou and went up along the Loire, fought there and burned the market town which is called Varrandi.

The following winter Óláfr stayed on the Seine and sent his foster-father Hrani ahead of him to England to raise support for him through gifts of money and friendly speeches. He did this, travelling widely around England, and came all the way to London and made peace for him. The following spring Óláfr took ships from the west of France to England and fought a battle there by Jungafurða, and was victorious. He fought his seventeenth battle in the west by Valdi, and was always victorious.³⁸¹

At the time when Óláfr was west in Poitou, Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson died west in England, before Óláfr came to England for the second time. In that year fourteen years had passed since the fall of Óláfr Tryggvason. Two years before, Jarl Eiríkr had left Norway for England.

CHAPTER 28

Next Óláfr, son of Haraldr grenski, set out east from England with two *merchant ships*, and took with him a *hundred* and twenty (140) men, all in chain-mail; they had bad weather at sea and such high seas that they narrowly escaped death, but because of the qualities of the company on board, and the king's luck, it turned out all right.

³⁸⁰ *Hkr* (II 25) has 'out to the Straits of Gibraltar and from there out to Jerusalem'. The reference to the Straits of Gibraltar 'suggests that the saga-writers at any rate believed the preceding battles, so difficult for us to locate with precision, to have been somewhere on the west coast of the Iberian peninsula' (Fell 1981, 121). The names listed in the Index of Place Names are those proposed by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (*Hkr* II).

³⁸¹ According to *Hkr* (II 34), Óláfr accompanied the sons of Ethelred from France; after fighting with them at Jungafurða, he went to Valdi in Northumbria while they retreated to France. The *Legendary Saga* (17) numbers these battles as Óláfr's fourteenth and fifteenth, and the battle in Varrandi as the thirteenth. Fidjestøl (1982, 118) takes the numbers recorded in *Fsk* as an indication that Sighvatr's poem originally had 17 verses.

They came in from the sea at Staðr, and came to land where there is a little island called Sæla. Then Óláfr spoke, saying that the day of their reaching land was a lucky one, and he reckoned it a good sign that they had come to Sæla (Happiness).³⁸² They went ashore on the island, and the king stepped into mud with one foot, saved himself from falling with his knee and said:

‘Now I have fallen.’

Hrani answered, ‘You did not fall, lord; you just set your foot firmly in Norway.’³⁸³

The king laughed and said, ‘It may be so, if God [171] wishes it.’

Then they went down to the ships and sailed south along the coast past Firðir, and put in from their course at the place called Sauðungssund, berthed one ship on either side of the sound and stretched a stout cable between them. At the same moment Jarl Hákon Eiríksson rowed to the sound with a fully-manned *skeið* and thought there were merchants in the sound, and the jarl rowed forward between the ships. Then Óláfr’s men wound up the rope under the keel in the middle of the warship, having made windlasses for that, and as soon as it became at all taut against the ship, the ship rose up at the back and plunged down in front so that the sea poured in around the bows, the ship was swamped and soon capsized. King Óláfr caught Jarl Hákon as he swam, and all the men they could get hold of, but some had perished under stones and missiles, and some sank. The Jarl was brought up onto the king’s ship, and he was then seventeen years old, and the best-looking man people had ever seen. He had thick hair, fine as silk, with a gold band fastened around his head. He sat down in front of the raised rear deck.

Then said King Óláfr, ‘It is no lie,’ he said, ‘that is told about your family, what handsome men you are, but now your luck has deserted you.’

Then the jarl answered, ‘It is not ill luck that has come upon us,’ said he; ‘it has been the case for a long time that chieftains have defeated each other in turn. I have not come far beyond childhood,

³⁸² The modern form is Selje. *Sæla* has been considered a variant of Selja, adopted for the sake of the pun (Storm in Theodorici monachus 1880, 26 n. 8). Ólafur Halldórsson (1984, 107–112) considers that the form may have arisen in Theodorici by analogy with Mostr (meaning ‘abundance’), said there to be the site of Óláfr Tryggvason’s landing on his return to Norway (Theodorici 1998, 13).

³⁸³ Stumbling was believed to be a bad omen, and Hrani’s words can be taken as an attempt to avert the omen (Almqvist 1974–76 [1991, 55–56]).

and we were not well prepared to defend ourselves just now, and we were not expecting hostility. Maybe it will turn out better for us another time.'

Then said King Óláfr, 'Do you not have the feeling now, jarl, that as a result of what has happened here you will have neither victory nor defeat in future?'

The jarl answered, 'That is in your hands, lord, for the moment.'

Then said King Óláfr, 'What will you do in exchange if I allow you to go wherever you like, safe and unharmed?'

The jarl asked what he was demanding.

'Nothing other,' said King Óláfr, 'than that you leave the country and give up your power, and swear oaths to me that you will not fight against me in future.'

Then the jarl answered and said that he would do that. Then Jarl Hákon swore [172] oaths to King Óláfr that he would never fight against him or defend Norway against him. Then King Óláfr gave quarter to Hákon and all his men and had the *snekkja* righted, and the jarl took his ship and rowed away, and the next autumn Hákon sailed west to England and went to see his uncle, King Knútr, and told him on what terms he and Óláfr digri had parted. King Knútr received him warmly and established him as jarl among his following and gave him a large fiefdom and authority, and he stayed there for a long time in high favour.

CHAPTER 29

King Óláfr then went south along the coast and east into Vík, there beached his ships, and in the autumn went inland to Hringaríki to his stepfather Sigurðr,³⁸⁴ who was then married to King Óláfr's mother Ásta, daughter of Guðbrandr kúla. King Sigurðr welcomed his stepson warmly, and he stayed there more or less until Yule, and Sigurðr feasted them with great magnificence, giving them meat and ale every other day, alternately with bread and butter and milk to drink.

³⁸⁴ Later in the text the descent of Óláfr's stepfather Sigurðr, father of Haraldr harðráði, is traced from Haraldr hárfagri (p. 181). He is commonly referred to by his nickname *sjr*; see note 400.

Shortly before Yule King Óláfr went north into upper Þrándheimr with his troop, but he heard that Jarl Sveinn was inland at Steinker, and had come to Steinker at Yule. Jarl Sveinn was holding the Yule feast there. And when King Óláfr came into Orkadálr he got three *snekkjur* there, and they rowed in along the fjord, pulling against the current. And when Einarr þambarskelfir learned of Óláfr's movements he sent his men in a *cutter* to Jarl Sveinn, and they reached him with the news in the middle of the night. Then the jarl and his men got up and went on board two *cutters* that were floating under tarpaulins by the farm, and rowed through the night out to Skarnssund, but when day came they saw where King Óláfr was going, and then Jarl Sveinn turned his ships in under cover of land until King Óláfr had gone past, and then he rowed [173] on his way out along the fjord. King Óláfr took all the Yule provisions that Jarl Sveinn had got ready for himself, and then he had a meeting with the people of inner Þrándheimr, and they accepted him as king and swore oaths to him, and then he went out to Niðaróss, remembering that his kinsman, Óláfr Tryggvason, had had a marketplace established there. Then King Óláfr had wood taken there to build himself quarters. One night somewhat later, Jarl Sveinn came down from Gaulardalr unexpectedly with a large force, but King Óláfr succeeded in boarding his ships and rowed out from the river, and they lost few men, but the jarl had all the building materials burned, as Þórðr Sjáreksson says.³⁸⁵

128. Burned were the king's buildings—
 a blaze, I think, felled the dwelling,
 half-made, hard by Nið itself;
 the host with soot was showered.

Hkr II 57
Skáldsk I 98

King Óláfr sailed his ships to Orkadálr, and went overland from there to Upplönd and assembled a large force, and went in the spring into Vík with his stepfather Sigurðr.

King Óláfr had made friends with the powerful men in Norway by means of gifts of money, and he had had a *longship* built during the winter with a king's head on the prow. He carved that himself.

³⁸⁵ In *Heimskringla* this verse is said to come from a *flokkr* about the otherwise unknown Klœngr Brúason, but the poet is not named other than in *Fagrskinna*. Þórðr Sjáreksson's memorial poem for King Óláfr is cited as verse 146.

It was a big ship, and was called *Karlhöfði* (Man-Headed).³⁸⁶ He commanded it [174] himself, and when his ships were equipped he headed out along the *Vík* and moored his ship by *Nesjar*, on the inner side of *Grenmarr*.

Jarl *Sveinn* gathered his troops as soon as King *Óláfr* had left *Brándheimr*, summoned out all the men from throughout *Brándheimr* and *Hálogaland*, and all the way as he travelled south he held meetings with the *bændr*, and got great support, and went with his army until he came east off *Nesjar* and put into harbour there. King *Óláfr* had a smaller troop than the jarl, and yet the king headed to meet the jarl and steered his *Karlhöfði* at the jarl's ship, and they fastened their prows together and laid them side by side. This battle was on Palm Sunday. *Sighvatr* tells most clearly of this battle in *Nesjavísur*:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 129. I know how the one experienced
in the frost of spear-points ³⁸⁷
caused <i>Karlhöfði</i> to be laid
close to the jarl east of <i>Agðir</i> . | <i>Nesjavísur</i> 4
<i>Hkr</i> II 61
<i>Legendary saga</i> 76 |
|--|---|

This battle lasted a long time, and the end of it was, in accordance with God's providence, that King *Óláfr* had victory, and many of the jarl's ships were stripped of men. The jarl himself also came close to having his *skeið* captured because King *Óláfr*'s men had got grappling-hooks onto the beak of the prow, and the prow was chopped away from the ship, and so the ship got free. The jarl thus got away with the help of his kinsman *Einarr*, for he had a cable thrown onto his ship. Then the jarl fled with all his troop, except those who were given quarter. *Sighvatr* begins *Nesjavísur* like this:

- | | |
|---|--|
| [175] 130. In spring the king certainly
set out from <i>Vík</i> westwards—
black boards ³⁸⁸ they barged together
both—and the jarl from the north.
I can tell to trees of victory ³⁸⁹ | <i>Nesjavísur</i> 1
3GT 79 (1st line) |
|---|--|

³⁸⁶ The ship's name *Karlhöfði* is mentioned in *Sighvatr*'s verse (v. 129); Jesch supposes that the account of the king's carving of the prow is invented to account for this (2001, 137). Paasche proposed that the name was in fact an allusion to *Óláfr*'s role model Charlemagne (*Karlamagnus*) (1914, 13).

³⁸⁷ *odda frosts kennir*: 'one experienced in frost of spears (battle)', warrior.

³⁸⁸ *blá borð*: 'dark boards', wooden ships.

³⁸⁹ *sigrvíðir*: 'victory-trees', warriors.

how turned out their meeting,
quite clearly, for I was present—
they carved the water.

Here it is mentioned that these events had only just happened when the poem was composed, and one who took part in the battle composed it himself, and in the same poem he says further:³⁹⁰

131. The gilt staff under standards
swept before the noble ruler
where, wagers of Gǫndul's-shirt din,³⁹¹
we advanced on the ships, furious. *Nesjavísur* 6
Hkr II 63

[176] And further he recited this:

132. Sveinn himself had the swarthy
stems carved off forcefully—
rowers had almost reached him,
raising our hopes of winning—
when the host had hewn off,
to the happiness of the eagle
of Yggr,³⁹²—black birds got plenty
of bodies—the vessel's prows. *Nesjavísur* 7
Hkr II 64–65

This refers to what was related earlier, and further he recited this:

133. This year³⁹³ in Inner Þrándheimr,
I think surely, for the battle
no wise maid will mock us,
meagre though the king's troop was.
Rather the girl will ridicule
the ranks who went forward—
we crimsoned the skerry's country³⁹⁴—
if she can choose—on their beards.³⁹⁵ *Nesjavísur* 11
Hkr II 69

³⁹⁰ *Heimskringla* gives a clearer context for the verse: 'Then King Óláfr's men prepared to board [the jarl's ships]. Then the standard was carried onto the ship next to the jarl's ship, and the king himself advanced before the standard.'

³⁹¹ *Gǫndlar serks gnýr*: 'din of the shirt of Gǫndul (valkyrie)', din of the mailcoat, battle.

³⁹² *Yggs gjóðr*: 'Yggr's (Óðinn's) osprey', raven.

³⁹³ *i ári*: 'this year', or 'early in the morning'. According to *Heimskringla* the battle took place early on the morning of Palm Sunday; this date confirmed in v. 135, though the verse is not cited in *Hkr*.

³⁹⁴ *skers fold*: 'land of the skerry', the sea.

³⁹⁵ *sækja fram skaggi*: apparently a mocking expression for 'fall to the ground'.

[177] And further he recited this:

134. I find that not fitting to trees of
 fire of the hand,³⁹⁶ who formerly
 were true to their word, seemed
 the betrayal of the ruler. *Nesjavísur* 13

This refers to the Þrándir having sworn oaths to him and not keeping them, for they fought with Jarl Sveinn against him, and further he recited this:

135. A hard fight Óláfr's followers
 fought on Palm Sunday;
 On my head my Poitou helmet—
 I had thus to wait for Easter. *Nesjavísur* 14

Jarl Sveinn went south to Denmark, and from there east to Sweden to see King Óláfr of the Swedes, and told him of these events. King Óláfr welcomed the jarl and invited him to stay with him in Sweden, but he wanted to go raiding [178] in Austríki in the summer, and he did so. And when autumn began he had got east to Kirjálaland, and from there went harrying up into Garðar, and there took sick and died.

Einarr þambarskelfir went back to Sweden and stayed there for many years in the realm of the king of the Swedes or in Norðhellingjaland and sometimes in Denmark.

King Óláfr inn digri then subjugated all of Norway from Elfr in the east, and north to Gandvíkr. He stayed in the east the first year by the Raumelfr and had an earthwork built which is now called Sarpsborg, and founded a market place there. In the same year King Óláfr arranged a meeting with the local heathen kings down from inland, and at their meeting, when King Óláfr found that they would not accept Christianity, he had nine kings taken captive in one morning, had some blinded and some maimed in some other way, and some he banished into outlawry. King Óláfr set such store by all men being Christian in his kingdom that it was necessary either to lose one's life or leave the country, or as a third choice accept bap-

³⁹⁶ *hreifa elds viðir*: 'trees of fire of the hand (gold)', men.

tism, in accordance with the king's command. Then there was no valley where the inhabitants were not Christian.

CHAPTER 30

Between King Óláfr Haraldsson and King Óláfr Eiríksson of the Swedes there were great causes of disagreement; the king of the Swedes reckoned that King Óláfr had taken his tributary lands, and they killed each other's men because of this, and each burned large territories belonging to the other. The people of both countries were very dissatisfied with this, and powerful men made a plan to mediate between the kings, and this was brought into effect in such a way that King Óláfr svenski was to give his daughter Ingigerðr in marriage to King Óláfr Haraldsson.

So it happened one day that Óláfr svenski had ridden out to amuse himself with his hawks and his hounds, and [179] came back before lunch and had caught five cranes. The king went to his daughter Ingigerðr and showed her his catch and said to her:

'Do you know of any king having caught more in one morning hour?'

And she answered in this way: 'It was a bigger haul when Óláfr Haraldsson captured nine kings in one morning and took possession of all their kingdoms.'

Then King Óláfr of the Swedes answered, very angry, 'You have fallen in love too soon with Óláfr digri. You have never yet seen him and yet you value him more than me. For that very reason you shall never marry Óláfr digri.'

After that Óláfr svenski broke off the meeting and the whole agreement with King Óláfr of Norway. And when King Óláfr learned of this, he sent his men east to see the king of the Swedes and asked for that same agreement and reconciliation from him. The king of the Swedes answered and said that there was no hope of Óláfr digri marrying Ingigerðr, who was the daughter of both a king and a queen:

'I have,' he said, 'another daughter, and she is illegitimate, who is called Ástriðr; he shall have her if he likes, with the same money and property as I was going to give Ingigerðr before.'

King Óláfr's messengers went back and told him how matters stood.

The skald Sighvatr had been on this expedition, and he composed a *flokk* about it and called it *Austrfararvísur* (Eastern Travel Verses), and says much about this journey in this poem.³⁹⁷

King Óláfr asked his friends for advice whether he should accept this offer or continue his disputes with the king of the Swedes, but most urged him to make peace with the king of the Swedes, and reckoned that there was sufficient prospect of disputes with the Danes, who for a long time had had great power over Norway. By the advice of his friends King Óláfr made peace with the king of the Swedes and married his daughter Ástriðr, and their daughter was Úlfhildr, who was married to Ótta, duke of [180] Brunswick; from them was descended the emperor Ótta, son of Duke Heinrekr.³⁹⁸ Óláfr svenski then married his daughter Ingigerðr to King Jarisleifr, son of King Valdamarr (Vladimir) in Hólmgarðr,³⁹⁹ and King Óláfr in Norway and Ingigerðr sent many valuable presents and confidential messengers to each other.

At this time Jarl Rognvaldr Úlfsson, a kinsman of Queen Ingigerðr, was in Garðaríki. He was a very great friend of King Óláfr, as Sighvatr said when he had come back from the mission on which King Óláfr had sent him east into Garðaríki:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 136. You must, mighty ruler,
with mighty Rognvaldr firmly
keep on terms; he kindly
cares for your needs night and day.
And each who will eastwards—
all agree to that—travel
by ship, of your men, sire,
has shelter there with Rognvaldr. | <i>Austrfararvísur</i> 21 (1st half)
<i>Hkr</i> II 145 (1st half)

<i>Austrfararvísur</i> 18 (2nd half)
<i>Hkr</i> II 142 (2nd half) |
|---|--|

³⁹⁷ Twenty-one verses of Sighvatr's *Austrfararvísur* are preserved in *Heimskringla*. Verse 136 is believed to belong to the poem.

³⁹⁸ Úlfhildr is referred to in *Ágrip* as Gunnhildr (*Ágr* 26). Úlfhildr's husband was in fact Ordulf, Duke of Saxony (1020–72) (see AB 150–58). Their granddaughter Úlfhild married Henry I (the Black), Duke of Bavaria; their grandson, Henry V (the Lion), Duke of Saxony and Bavaria, was the father of the Otto referred to here, who became Holy Roman Emperor in 1209.

³⁹⁹ Jarisleifr (Yaroslav) ruled in Kiev from the death of his father Vladimir in 1016 until 1054.

CHAPTER 31

King Óláfr also had much to fear from the Danes; they reckoned that he had established himself in their tributary lands, and there was supposed to be unhindered trade between Denmark and Norway. Nothing came of this quarrel because all the most important Danish leaders were west in England at the time, and they could not undertake other engagements. [181]

King Óláfr had a great market town founded in Niðaróss and had a church built there and endowed it with money. He also had a church built in every *shire* and gave them revenues. When King Óláfr had become sole ruler in Norway, he established laws with the advice of the wisest men, and enacted them in the form in which they have remained ever since.

After Sigurðr *sýr*⁴⁰⁰ had died there was no man in Norway who bore the title of king but King Óláfr, and that had never happened in Norway since the reign of Haraldr inn hárfagri, and in between there had always been petty kings. King Óláfr first subjected the kings in Norway, and took tribute from Orkney, Shetland and the Faroes. So said Óttarr:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 137. Fast and fitly you hold power | <i>Hofuðlausn</i> 19 |
| of fine people's rulers, | <i>Hkr</i> II 172–73 |
| inhabitants of Hjaltland ⁴⁰¹ | <i>Orkn</i> 41 |
| are held to be your followers. | <i>Legendary saga</i> 106 |
| No battle-brisk ruler | <i>Skáldsk</i> I 105 (2nd half) |
| has been in the eastern lands | |
| who forced rule on western islands, | |
| before we received you. | |

⁴⁰⁰ Here the nickname *sýr* is first used of Sigurðr. This word can mean 'sow' and is so interpreted in some texts where Sigurðr's son Haraldr harðráði is taunted by an allusion to a sow (e.g. *Hreiðars þátr*; *Mork* 135); the genitive form *sýr* in *Fsk* (296) and Snorri's *Separate saga of St Óláfr* (*Hkr* II 438) is proper to this form. Elsewhere in *Fsk*, however, the genitive form *sýrar* is found (*Fsk* 226), as it is in *Agrip* (*Agr* 37) and in an eleventh-century verse (*Skj* B I 372), and *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 56) and *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* II 219) have the genitive *sýrs*; the twelfth-century *Nóregs konunga tal* refers to him as *Sigurðr sýrr* (*Skj* A I 584). The nickname may be related to *Sýr*, a poetical name for the goddess Freyja, probably referring to her association with sows (*Gylf* 29; E. O. G. Turville-Petre 1964, 176, 308 n. 2).

⁴⁰¹ *Hjaltlendingar*: inhabitants of Shetland (Hjaltland).

[182] King Sigurðr sýr and Ásta had three sons; the eldest was called Guðrøðr, the second Hálfðan, and the youngest was called Haraldr. Their daughter was called Gunnhildr, who was married to Ketill of Hringunes.

King Óláfr was a powerful man within the country, and severe in punishment, a wise man of great generosity. When men of power saw that the king gave equal judgement to great and small, they began to be ill-pleased, because the *landed men* then were so quarrelsome and unyielding that some would not give way in their suits to kings or jarls; they considered they did not have to reckon their family trees far back to kings or men of royal birth or other great leaders. Then the men of power were hardened against the king, and that was especially true of Erlingr Skjálgsson, who was then the most powerful *landed man* in Norway. Þórir hundr (Hound) was also a powerful man; he had travelled to Bjarmaland and killed there a powerful man's son who was called Karli, who had been travelling with him. King Óláfr sent men to arrest Þórir, and he was barely able to get quarter for the crime and left the country. Many other *landed men* became false to the king in their schemes.

Next King Óláfr of the Swedes died, and his son Qnundr, who was known as Jákob, succeeded him.⁴⁰² He was a very great friend of his brother-in-law King Óláfr. They exchanged messengers between them and made their plans.

CHAPTER 32

At that time the Danish realm was ruled by Úlfr, son of Þorgils sprakaleggr (Snap-leg), who married Ástríðr, daughter of Sveinn tjúguskegg (Fork-beard). One summer King Óláfr called a *levy* out from Norway and went with a great army south along the coast and so to Denmark, raided around Skáni and Halland and Sjóland. King Qnundr of the Swedes went on the attack with an army of Swedes and Gautar from the east, and they laid waste everything wherever they went, and they intended to subject the whole of Denmark to

⁴⁰² It is explained in *Heimskringla* that the name Jakob, chosen because he was born on the day before the feast day of St James the Apostle (25th July), was considered inappropriate for a king of the Swedes and was changed to Qnundr when he succeeded his father (*Hkr* II 130, 156).

themselves. King Knútr heard from England in the west [183] that attacks were being made in Denmark, and travelled east from England with a large force, as the skald Sighvatr says in the memorial *drápa* that he composed for Knútr gamli (the Old):⁴⁰³

138. *Knútr was, under the heavens . . .* *Knútsdrápa* 7
 who heard from the east *Hkr* II 274
 of peace, prince's son⁴⁰⁴ *Legendary saga* 140
 piercing-eyed, of the Danes.
 From the west the wood,
 wake shining,⁴⁰⁵ glided,
 bearing the adversary
 of Aðalráðr from there.

139. And bore in the breeze *Knútsdrápa* 8
 black sails on the yards— *Hkr* II 274
 great was the lord's going— *Legendary saga* 140
 the land-ruler's dragon ships.
 [184] And the keels that
 came from the west
 through surf on the sea
 sailed to Limafjörðr.

In this same *drápa* Sighvatr told of King Óláfr's journey from the north:

140. *Knútr is, under the heavens . . .* *Knútsdrápa* 3
 I think I have heard *Hkr* II 270
 Haraldr's son in war *Legendary saga* 142
 had ample courage.⁴⁰⁶
 Óláfr, the king blessed
 with prosperous seasons,

⁴⁰³ Sighvatr's *Knútsdrápa* is in a variant of the metre called by Snorri Sturluson *togdrápuháttir* 'journey-poem form' (*Háttatal* v. 68, Snorri Sturluson 1991, 29–30). According to Snorri, the norm in this form is four syllables in even lines, five in odd lines, but 'it is not wrong if there are five syllables in the line when some of them are short and quick. For *togdrápa* form there must be a *stef* [refrain] for the first line and its sense is completed in the last line of the poem . . .' (Snorri Sturluson 1987, 207). The beginning of the refrain is italicized in verses 138 and 140; it is completed in verses 143, 144 and 163.

⁴⁰⁴ *niðr* corrected from MS *lið*.

⁴⁰⁵ *viðr varglæstr*: 'wood with gleaming wake', ship. *viðr* is the reading of *Heimskringla* where *Fsk* has *ver*; *varrglæstr* is conjectured by the editor of *Hkr* which has *var glæstr*. *Fsk* has *var hvert*. The verb *skreið* 'glided' is in the plural, *skriðu*, in *Fsk*.

⁴⁰⁶ *hug vel duga*: this is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *hugleiks duga*.

sent on the fish's path⁴⁰⁷
his force south from Nið.

141. Cold keels swept south,
carrying the lord—
that was found out—
to flat Selund;
and with a second,
Swedish, army,
Qnundr rowed⁴⁰⁸
against the Danes.

Knútsdrápa 4
Hkr II 270
Legendary saga 142

- [185] 142. The army's lord
had lands enclosed
with many nose-guarded
men by the sea-shores;
[where the grey billow
growled by the ship,
the thunder of Þundr
throve by the surf-ski].⁴⁰⁹

Knútsdrápa 5
Legendary saga 144

143. The keen rulers
could not subdue⁴¹⁰
Denmark under⁴¹¹ them
despite warfare.
The Danes' slayer keenly⁴¹²
Skáni had harried;
. . . *the foremost ruler*.

Knútsdrápa 6
Hkr II 277–78
Legendary saga 144

[186] Then the kings Óláfr and Qnundr went east through Eyrarsund, raided around the eastern part of Skáni and around Smálönd. It then happened as was referred to earlier in the poem, that King Knútr had come from the west to Limafjörðr; he gathered together an invincible army and pursued them east; they met on the eastern side of Skáni, at the place called Á in helga (Helgeå; Holy River).

⁴⁰⁷ *lýs gata*: 'the pollack's path', the sea.

⁴⁰⁸ *at há*: 'on the rowlock', by ship. This is an emendation of *hanum*.

⁴⁰⁹ The second half of this verse is garbled and cannot be translated without extensive emendation. The translation here is based on Finnur Jónsson's emended version in *Skj* B I, 233; see also *NN* §2924. *hjolmunlǫ*: billow, elsewhere a river name; *Þundar þrúna*: 'thunder of Þundr (Óðinn)', battle; *brims qndurr*: 'ski of surf', ship.

⁴¹⁰ *spanit*: corrected from MS *svana*.

⁴¹¹ *und*: the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *áðr*.

⁴¹² *skarpla*: this is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *snarpla*, which does not alliterate.

There was a great battle there and many fell on both sides, for neither would flee. So says Sighvatr:

144. Once in his land
 the lord of Jótland⁴¹³
 let it not dwindle—
 to the delight of men.
 he would not allow
 the least land theft,
 the defender of Danes;
 . . . *the foremost ruler.*
- Knútsdrápa* 8
Hkr II 278
Legendary saga 146

This battle was also commemorated by Óttarr when he composed about Knútr:⁴¹⁴

145. Swedes you routed, ruler
 ready with gold;⁴¹⁵ of wolf-bait⁴¹⁶
 plenty passed to the she-wolf
 at the place called Á in helga.
- Knútsdrápa* 11
Hkr II 280–81
Legendary saga 146

[187] Þórðr Sjáreksson composed a memorial lay about King Óláfr and also mentioned this battle:

146. The king of Agðir's people,
 Óláfr, irons' thunder⁴¹⁷
 made with the mighty Jutish
 monarch,⁴¹⁸ who split arm-rings.⁴¹⁹
 Close to him in the conflict
 keenly⁴²⁰ shot the Skánungar's king;⁴²¹
 Sveinn's son did not prove to be
 soft; the wolf howled over carrion.
- Róðudrápa*
Hkr II 281
Legendary saga 146
 (2nd half)

After the battle King Qnundr of the Swedes went east to Sweden, and King Óláfr stayed behind with his army in Kalmarnar, and

⁴¹³ *Jótlands jefurr*: 'lord of Jutland (i.e. of Denmark)', Knútr.

⁴¹⁴ Verses 145 and 146 do not occur in *Fsk* (B).

⁴¹⁵ *sókna qrr siklingr*: 'king generous with gold'.

⁴¹⁶ *úlfs beita*: 'wolf's bait', carrion.

⁴¹⁷ *stála prima*: 'thunder of steels, weapons', battle.

⁴¹⁸ *Jóta qðlingr*: 'king of Jutes (i.e. of Danes)', Knútr.

⁴¹⁹ *þanns klauf hringa*: 'who split rings (i.e. gave away treasure)', generous lord; or 'who broke ring-mail', warrior.

⁴²⁰ *skarpt*: the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *skafi*.

⁴²¹ *Skónunga gramr*: 'king of the people of Skáni (i.e. of all Denmark)', Knútr.

meant to wait for the Danish force to disperse. King Knútr turned his force back and laid up in Eyrarsund and intended to ambush King Óláfr as he travelled back to Norway.

While King Knútr was lying in Eyrarsund, many of King Óláfr's *landed men* sent word to him secretly and asked for peace and security for themselves from King Knútr.

When King Óláfr heard that King Knútr was keeping his force together and that the Danish force was not dispersing, it seemed to him quite impossible to go among such an army with a small force, though he was bold and had a fine troop, and he remembered what had happened to Óláfr [188] Tryggvason when he had put such faith in large ships and a bold troop that he advanced with few ships into a great army. Then King Óláfr chose a wise course and left his ships at the place called Barrvík, and so went overland through Gautland and Smáland and so to Vestra-Gautland and so down into Vík. One old chieftain, a wise man, called Hárekr from Þjótta, son of Eyvindr skáldaspillir, told the king that he felt he would not be able to walk such a long and difficult path, and said he would rather go home to Norway on his ship. He composed this verse:⁴²²

- | | |
|--|---|
| 147. On my long steed of land resounding ⁴²³
I have decided, hater
of Rhine's fire, ⁴²⁴ to ride from here
rather than walking;
though out in Eyrarsund,
armed with warships,
Knútr, the limb-fetter tree, ⁴²⁵
may lie; men know my boldness. | Hkr II 289
<i>Legendary saga</i> 148
3GT 64 (lines 1–2) |
|--|---|

He put out in his ship, rowed north around Skáni and sailed through the following night, and at dawn they approached Eyrarsund. Then Hárekr had the sail, mast and yards lowered, and had them take grey tarpaulins and spread them over the ship between the prow

⁴²² The verse and introductory clause do not occur in *Fsk* (B).

⁴²³ *langr láðs dynmarr*: 'long horse of the resounding land (sea)', longship.

⁴²⁴ *Rínleys leiðir*: 'one who hates fire of the Rhine (gold, which was hidden in the Rhine according to the legend of the Niflungar)', generous man. This follows the interpretation of Finnur Jónsson, which requires emendation of *leiðar* to *leiðir* (*Skj* B 1 286); Bjarni Einarsson has a different interpretation retaining *leiðar* (*Fsk* 188, cf. *NN* §773).

⁴²⁵ *leggfjöturs lundr*: 'tree of the limb-fetter (arm-ring)', generous man, lord.

and the stern, and he had men row in a few of the rowing spaces [189] both fore and aft, but the middle of the ship looked completely deserted; so he headed west into the sound before the wind and current.

Then Knútr's fleet was lying to either side, some by Skáni, others by Sjóland.

Then the watchmen said, 'A ship is passing here into the sound.'

Then one man answered, 'That is an old ship; see how grey and bleached it is, and it must be some herring boat. The ship is very heavy laden, and few men on it.'

So Hárekr passed through Eyrarsund and King Knútr's fleet; then the sun began to rise. Next they turned in towards the shore, raised the mast and yards and put up the gold ornaments and the weather vane, and hoisted their sail. It was as white as snow, of cloth from Hálogaland, and banded with stripes. Then the warship sailed out into the sound. King Knútr's troop saw where the ship was sailing, and it looked handsome to them. Then King Knútr was told that King Óláfr must have sailed through the sound, it was so well equipped.

King Knútr answered, 'It must have been part of King Óláfr's troop, but not the king himself; it may be that it was Hárekr from Þjótta who sailed there. That same old man, whom we thought we had taken, also sailed round us in Beltissund.'

Hárekr sailed north along the coast. And when he came out of Eyrarsund, he composed a verse:

148. I will not let ladies
 of Lund nor Danish maidens
 jeer—the harm-ring oak-tree⁴²⁶
 outside the isles we drive on—
 that I did not have daring
 to drive the bollard-horse,⁴²⁷
 falcon's ship Jǫrð,⁴²⁸ on Fróði's
 flat paths,⁴²⁹ in the autumn.

Hkr II 291
Legendary saga 150

⁴²⁶ *læbaugs eik*: 'oak of the harm-ring (dragon)', ship with dragon figureheads.

⁴²⁷ *krapla Valr*: 'Valr (a horse) of the bollard or mooring-post', ship.

⁴²⁸ *ifla flausts Jǫrð*: 'Jǫrð (goddess) of the ship of the falcon', goddess of the hand (on which the hawk is carried), woman.

⁴²⁹ *Fróða flatslóðir*: 'flat paths of Fróði (a sea-king)', the sea.

[190] He then sailed north to his estates and met King Óláfr the following spring in Niðaróss, and had then come south from Hálogaland.

That same autumn King Knútr sailed west to England, and had earlier sent his men in Norway to follow up the offers of friendship that King Óláfr's *landed men* had sent him, and he then sent them valuable gifts and offers of his friendship. The messengers came back to King Knútr with the news that many powerful men had sworn oaths that they would accept Knútr as king over Norway if he came to the country.

CHAPTER 33

The following spring King Knútr made ready his army to go east from England, and with him then was his kinsman Jarl Hákon, son of Eiríkr. And that same spring the poet Sighvatr came to England and intended to go on a pilgrimage to Rome, and when he heard of the plan of King Knútr and Hákon, he composed this:⁴³⁰

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>149. They show themselves likely
to shake the life of Óláfr,
open-handed Knútr, all ready—
I fear the king's death—and Hákon.
[191] Let the king⁴³¹ stand firm on the fells
at first, though Knútr and the jarls
hardly like it; the battle more hopeful
if he himself gets away.</p> | <p><i>Vestrfararvísur</i> 3
<i>Hkr</i> II 272</p> |
|---|---|

King Knútr called to mind many grievances which he considered he had against King Óláfr. The first grievance was that King Óláfr had captured Hákon, Knútr's sister's son, and made him swear oaths to himself and took power from him and drove him out of the country.⁴³² King Óláfr had also taken into his control the territory

⁴³⁰ According to *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* II 271) Sighvatr came to England after a trading journey to Rouen, and while there composed a *flokkr* (verse sequence) called *Vestrfararvísur* (Western Travel Verses), to which this verse is believed to belong.

⁴³¹ *vǫrðr*: 'defender', common in kennings for 'king', but lacking a determinant here.

⁴³² See chapter 28.

which for a long time had been tributary to the kings of the Danes. King Óláfr had also raided in Knútr's land.

King Knútr went with his army east from England to Denmark and entered Limafjörðr and sailed from there to Norway with twelve hundred (1440) ships, and had called out a full *levy* from Denmark and England. He brought his force to Agðir and went with his whole army north along the coast and held meetings with the *bændr*, and he was accepted as king wherever he went; he did not halt in his journey before he came to Niðaróss. There he had a meeting of eight *shires* with the Þrændir, and the whole land was made subject to him by oath at the Eyraþing. About this expedition of King Knútr's, Þórarinn loftunga (Praise-tongue) says in the poem he composed about King Knútr:⁴³³

150. *Knútr is, under the sun*⁴³⁴ . . .
 he set off, gallant,⁴³⁵
 with a great force,
 my friend, to go there;⁴³⁶
 [192] the skilled king led
 from Limafjörðr out
 a fleet, not little,
 to the land of the otter.⁴³⁷

Togdrápa 2
Hkr II 308
Legendary saga 168

151. Agðir dwellers,
 doughty in battle,
 feared the coming
 of the feeder of the war-swan.⁴³⁸

Togdrápa 3
Hkr II 308
Legendary saga 168

⁴³³ Verses 150–53 are not in *Fsk* (B). According to *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* II 308) and *Knýtlinga saga* (*Knýt* 125), the poem is called *Togdrápa* (Journey-poem). See note 403 above for the metre called *togdrápuháttir*, which may be named after this poem; *togdrápa* appears as a common noun within the poem (*Skj* B I 209, v. 8). The first half of the refrain is italicized here; the second half has not been preserved. Þórarinn was an Icelandic poet said to have incurred Knútr's anger by composing a *flokkr* for him instead of the more formal *drápa*; he escaped execution by adding a refrain and further verses to the poem, which is accordingly called *Hofudlausn* (Head-Ransom) (*Hkr* II 307). He is later named as the poet of *Glelognskviða*, composed for Sveinn Alfifuson (*Hkr* II 406).

⁴³⁴ *sólar*: this is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *himnir*, influenced by Sighvatr's *Knútsdrápa* (see v. 138).

⁴³⁵ *siðnæmr*: 'quick to learn conduct'. This is the reading of *Hkr*; *Fsk* has *hliðnæmr*.

⁴³⁶ *þinnig*: to Norway.

⁴³⁷ *otrheimr*: 'home of the otter', sea.

⁴³⁸ *orbeidir sigrlana svans*: 'tempter of the swan of slaughter', warrior. *orbeidis* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *or bæðrs*.

The king's force was all
equipped with gold.
Such a sight was finer
than to hear the tale.

152. And off Listi
on the sea by Hádýr⁴³⁹
quickly passed by
coal-black vessels;
All Eikundasund
south to landward
of the water-hog⁴⁴⁰ was
with sea-skis⁴⁴¹ enclosed.⁴⁴²

Togdrápa 4
Hkr II 309
Legendary saga 168

- [193] 153. And by the ancient
barrow of Hjörnagli
quickly⁴⁴³ glided
secure allies.⁴⁴⁴
When the prow-cliff stud⁴⁴⁵
sailed before Staðr,
awesome was the journey
of the arrow-asker.⁴⁴⁶

Togdrápa 5
Hkr II 309
Legendary saga 168–69

Next he gave authority over all the domain of the king of Norway to his kinsman Hákon, who had previously been captured by King Óláfr and had sworn oaths to him that he would never oppose King Óláfr. Then King Knútr went back to Denmark with his army.

But King Óláfr had been in Upplönd while King Knútr had been taking control along the coast of Norway, and had had his ships guarded in Óslóarfjörðr. But when he learned that King Knútr had left the country, King Óláfr went to his ships and sailed north along the coast, and when he came off Jaðarr, Erlingr Skjálgsson was lying in wait for him with many *cutters* and one great *longship*, the *skeið*, which he had owned for a long time. He had accepted payment

⁴³⁹ *Hádýrs of haf*: *of* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *í*.

⁴⁴⁰ *brimgoltr*: 'sea-boar', kenning for ship; here, by *offjóst*, a reference to the mountain Hádýr (whose name means 'rowlock-animal').

⁴⁴¹ *sæskíð*: 'sea-ski', ship.

⁴⁴² *lukt*: emended from MS *lakt*. *Hkr* has *bygg*.

⁴⁴³ *hvasst*: is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *hraust*.

⁴⁴⁴ *gríðfastir fríðmenn*: allies (of the king), who are provided for by the king; retainers.

⁴⁴⁵ *staðnklifs stóð*: 'stud of the prow-cliff (wave)', fleet of ships. *stóð* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *stor*.

⁴⁴⁶ *orbeidir*: 'one who asks for arrows', warrior.

from King Knútr to hold the land under Jarl Hákon and to fight against King Óláfr, and when he saw where King Óláfr was sailing and thought he understood his intention, he said to his men that they should sail after King Óláfr and fight him. And when King Óláfr saw Erlingr sailing he said that the sails should [194] be shortened. Erlingr Skjálgsson had furled the sails of his *skeið* then so that it would not go faster than the other ships.

Then Erlingr said, 'Now their sails are being lowered, and they are escaping from us; let us spread the sail fully on the *skeið*,' and that was done.

Then the *skeið* went forward fast ahead of the *cutters*. King Óláfr headed inside Bókn and there sailed into the sound on the inner side of the islands that are called Tungueyjar. Then the *skeið* went north into the sound, and the first they knew of it was that ships were attacking them from both sides. There was fierce resistance there, but not for long, before the *skeið* was cleared. There every man was killed, until Erlingr alone was standing on the *after-deck*. So says Sighvatr.⁴⁴⁷

154. All the crew of Erlingr
at Bókn's shore had fallen,
the young king got the warship
cleared north of Tungur.
Skjalgr's daring son, scorning
deceit, from friends parted,
stood long on the *lypting*,
alone on the empty vessel.

Flokkur on Erlingr Skjálgsson 3
Hkr II 315
Legendary saga 154

[195] Then the king went back *amidships*; then his men attacked Erlingr; he defended himself courageously, for he was a very strong man and the most skilled in fighting in the whole of Norway.

Then King Óláfr said, 'You are really facing up to us today, Erlingr.'

'Yes, lord,' said he, 'Eagles must clash face to face; will you give me quarter, my lord?'

⁴⁴⁷ This is one of ten verses believed to belong to a *flokkur* (verse sequence) which, according to *Heimskringla*, Sighvatr composed on the death of Erlingr Skjálgsson (*Hkr* II 314).

King Óláfr answered, 'That will be apparent on your face before we part.'

Then Erlingr threw down his weapons and went down *amidships*. King Óláfr had a small axe in his hand. Erlingr threw down his shield and took the helmet from his head. King Óláfr stuck the point of the axe in his cheek and said:

'Each traitor to his lord must be marked in some way.'

Then Áslákr Fitjaskalli ran forward and struck with both hands into Erlingr's head so that he fell dead at once on the deck.

Then said King Óláfr to Áslákr, 'Damn you for your blow; you have just struck Norway out of my hands.'

Áslákr answered, 'It has turned out badly if so, my lord; I thought that I had just struck Norway into your hands. None of your enemies in Norway has been as powerful as this one.'

Then the king went onto his ship and fastened the *skeið* behind it in the sound, hoisted his sails and sailed north along the coast. Eggjar-Kálfr (Kálfr Árnason of Egge) and all his brothers were with King Óláfr when Erlingr was killed. So it says in the poem that Bjarni gullbráðrskáld (Gold-Brow Poet) composed about Kálfr Árnason:⁴⁴⁸

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 155. When he bade you try fighting, | <i>Kálfsflokkur</i> 1 (1st half) |
| friendship of Óláfr cheered you— | <i>Hkr</i> II 320 (1st half) |
| clear to men is your courage, | |
| Kálfr—east by Bókn itself. | |
| Brown boards ⁴⁴⁹ wallowed | <i>Kálfsflokkur</i> 2 (2nd half) |
| in blood north of Útsteinn; | <i>Hkr</i> II 321 (2nd half) |
| the king, it turned out truly, | |
| was betrayed from the land's rule. | |

[196] The fleet of *cutters* then followed into the sound, found the *skeið* with every last person killed on it, took Erlingr's body and prepared it for burial. Erlingr's sons and kinsmen banded together and travelled north after the king with a great host, and as the news came to the north that Erlingr was dead, the gathering went just as fast by the inland route to Rógaland and Hǫrðaland. King Óláfr

⁴⁴⁸ The verse, and the preceding introductory sentence, do not occur in *Fsk* (B). Bjarni Hallbjarnarson's poem on Kálfr Árnason is named as *Kálfsflokkur* in *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 25).

⁴⁴⁹ *brún borð*: 'brown boards', ships.

was nowhere able to get ashore because of the army of *bændr*, and the fleet of ships pursued him. This verse is attributed to King Óláfr:

156. Little joy the white warrior⁴⁵⁰
 will have tonight on Jaðarr—
 the raven feeds on furnished
 flesh; we make Gunnr's *din*.⁴⁵¹
 So only what is evil—
 angry, his ships⁴⁵² I conquered;
 land⁴⁵³ makes many perish—
 my robbery has brought him.

Hkr II 319–20
Legendary saga 158

King Óláfr took his ships north to Mœrr and learned then that Jarl Hákon had gathered together a large force in Þrándheimr, and also that almost the whole country had then been betrayed out of his rule. [197] Then King Óláfr left his ships at the place called Slygsfjörðr, and went from there to Upplond.

Before King Óláfr left the country, Eggjar-Kálfr parted from him and went north to his estates, but all the other brothers followed King Óláfr. With him went also Rognvaldr Brúsason, who afterwards became jarl in Orkney.

Jarl Hákon's men seized King Óláfr's ships, and then they drew lots among themselves for command of the ships. A man called Jökull won the command of Skegginn (the Bearded), and he composed this verse:⁴⁵⁴

157. My lot out of Slygs⁴⁵⁵—the lady
 won't learn that I regret it—
 to steer the ship—I wait for
 a storm on the bow-plain's reindeer⁴⁵⁶—

Hkr II 331

⁴⁵⁰ *hqlðr inn hvíti*: 'the white man'. A familiar jibe suggesting cowardice; cf. *hqlðr inn hvíti* (*Gunnlaugs saga* 90), *halr inn hvíti* (*Hallfreðar saga* 182), *sveinn inn hvíti* (*Bjarnar saga Hítðelakappa* 140, 144).

⁴⁵¹ *Gunnar gnyr*: 'clash of Gunnr (valkyrie)', battle.

⁴⁵² *skeiðar*.

⁴⁵³ i.e. disputes over rule of the land.

⁴⁵⁴ According to *Heimskringla* Jökull was an Iclander, son of Bárðr Jökulsson of Vatnsdalr. In that version he gets command of the Visundr (Bison), which had been Óláfr's own ship (*Hkr* II 331).

⁴⁵⁵ *Slygs*: a river in Slygsfjörðr (*ór Slygs*); the reading in *Heimskringla* is *frá Sult*, a river running into Toðarfjörðr, which according to *Heimskringla* is where the ships are drawn up. Slygsfjörðr runs into Toðarfjörðr further inland.

⁴⁵⁶ *hlýrvangs hreinn*: 'reindeer of the plain of the ship's flank (the bow)', reindeer of the sea, ship.

owned by Óláfr, cliffs of blaze of
 yew-bow's base;⁴⁵⁷ from the ruler
 himself victory was stolen
 this summer, inn digri.

CHAPTER 34

When thirteen years had passed since the battle of Nesjar, King Óláfr left the country. He was in the east in Neríki, and stayed there for a time with Sigtryggr, father of Ívarr, father of Sóni, father of [198] Jarl Karl, and when spring began and the ice thawed, King Óláfr went out into Sweden to see King Qnundr, his brother-in-law. He gave King Óláfr a ship, and then he went east to Garðaríki to see King Jarizleifr and was well received there; he stayed there the second winter and had his son Magnús there with him. His mother was called Álfhildr.⁴⁵⁸

During the time when King Óláfr was staying in Garðaríki, many of his friends followed him from the north from Norway, and he heard all the news of what was happening in the country.

In the summer when King Óláfr went to Austrríki, Jarl Hákon went west to England to claim his betrothed wife, but as he was travelling from the west in a *longship* stormy weather overtook him, and the jarl and all the ship's crew were lost,⁴⁵⁹ and this news came to Norway in the autumn, and later that same autumn the news came back to England.

That summer Eggjar-Kálfr went west to England at the summons of King Knútr, and before he left the west at the beginning of winter he got a promise from King Knútr that as long as he kept up battle in opposition to King Óláfr, if he came back to the country, and if he succeeded in withholding power from him, Kálfr was to be jarl over the country and hold it under King Knútr as Jarl Hákon

⁴⁵⁷ *ýstéttar fína kleif*: 'cliff of fire of the place of the yew-bow', hill (on which rests) fire of the hand, gold; woman. For the convention of addressing verses to a woman, see Frank 1988.

⁴⁵⁸ According to *Heimskringla* she was *kolluð* . . . *konungs ambótt*. *Hon var þó af góðum ættum komin* 'called the king's concubine, but was of good family' (*Hkr* II 209).

⁴⁵⁹ According to Snorri (*Hkr* II 335), Hákon was drowned in the Pentland Firth, a detail possibly borrowed directly from Theodoricus (1998, 23).

had held it under Haraldr Gormsson. So says Bjarni gullbráarskáld (Gold-Brow Poet):⁴⁶⁰

- | | |
|--|---|
| 158. I am not accustomed to gather
gossip about actions
of men; at your ⁴⁶¹ parting
you went straight to Knútr. | Kálfyflokkr 3 (1st half)
Hkr II 334 (1st half) |
| [199] London's king, before the company
came eastward, said that he had
—there was delay in this—found you
land in a little time. | Kálfyflokkr 4 (2nd half)
Hkr II 335 (2nd half) |

After that King Óláfr's friends sent him word that the land was now without a ruler, and asked him to come back to his kingdom. King Óláfr responded to their message and set out after Christmas, and left his son Magnús behind there to be fostered by King Jarizleifr, while he himself and his company went from the east over the ice all the way to the sea during the winter, and when spring began he went by sea, and so to his brother-in-law King Qnundr in Sweden, and he gave him troops, and from there he went to Helsingjaland, and that was a very rough journey; they went through forests and lakes and in many places carried their ships on their shoulders between the lakes, and made their way with great difficulty.

When King Óláfr had come out of Sweden, he made enquiries about his troops, and there were found to be nine *hundred* (1080) heathens among the force, and he told all who were not willing to be baptised to go back, and said he would not try to win land with a heathen army, and then five *hundred* (600) men accepted baptism, but four *hundred* (480) turned back.

King Óláfr came down to Súla in Veradalr, and went from there out to Stiklarstaðir.⁴⁶² There with him was his brother Haraldr, who was fifteen years old then. So says Þjóðólfr:⁴⁶³

⁴⁶⁰ The verse and introductory clause are not in *Fsk* (B).

⁴⁶¹ *ykkar*: genitive of the dual pronoun: 'of you two'. In *Heimskringla* this is placed as the second half of a verse in which the first half refers to Óláfr's departure for Russia, making it clear that the reference is to Kálf's parting from Óláfr.

⁴⁶² The battle of Stikla(r)staðir is conventionally dated to 29th July, 1030.

⁴⁶³ The verse and introductory clause are not in *Fsk* (B). Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, from Svarfaðardalr in northern Iceland, was a poet of Magnús inn góði and then of Haraldr harðráði. This verse is attributed to his poem *Sexstefja* (Poem with Six Refrains) in honour of Haraldr, which is mentioned in the *Separate Saga of St Óláfr* (*Hkr* II 439) (See E. O. G. Turville-Petre 1968).

159. He left reluctantly
 lifeless Óláfr, the ruler,
 his helmet-stand⁴⁶⁴ hiding,
 of twelve and three winters.

Sexstefja 1
Hkr III 68

[200] Also there were Bishop Sigurðr, Rognvaldr Brúsason, and Finnir Árnason, Þorbergr, Árni and Kolbjörn, four of the sons of Árni. Dagr, the king's kinsman, had not come. Against the king there came the army of *bændr*, from Hálogaland, Þrándheimr, Mœrr, and everywhere north of Staðr. These were the leaders of the *bændr*: Kálfr Árnason, Hárekr of Þjótta, Þórir hundr (the Hound), Erlendr of Gerði, Áslákr of Finney and the greater part of the *landed men* from north of Staðr. King Óláfr spoke to his brother Haraldr and told him not to take part in the battle, for it seemed to him that he was not yet able to bear arms. Haraldr answered and spoke a verse:

160. I do not fear to fight—
 affording the lady pleasure;
 shields in rage we redden—
 for the ranks I must stand in.
 Pleased with war, the young poet
 will not turn tail under
 spears, where blows are swiping;
 soldiers make the meeting deadly.

Hkr II 364
Legendary saga 188
 (attrib. Þormóðr)

There was a fierce and great battle; there fell King Óláfr inn helgi (the Saint) and much of his troop, Björn stallari (the Marshal) and Kolbjörn Árnason; but many just managed to get away. Haraldr Sigurðarson was seriously wounded. Rognvaldr Brúsason and Dagr [201] Hringsson wandered off after that to unknown lands. A great number also fell on the side of the *bændr*, and many good men.

After the death of King Óláfr his body was taken out to Kaupangr and buried there, and at once many miracles were done both by his blood and by his body.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁴ *hjalmsætr*: 'helmet-seat', head.

⁴⁶⁵ According to *Heimskringla* and most other texts, miracles associated with Óláfr began immediately after his death (Turville-Petre 1951, 159–64).

CHAPTER 35

At the time when King Óláfr had been killed in Þrándheimr, Sveinn, son of King Knútr, and his mother Álfifa (Ælfifu)⁴⁶⁶ came north from Denmark with a great force, and he went at once to the north of the country and took command of the whole of the kingdom that King Óláfr had ruled. One year after the death of King Óláfr his body was exhumed and laid in a shrine in the sight of all the Þrændir, on the advice of Bishop Sigurðr. Sveinn and his mother Álfifa were also there. King Sveinn had brought with him a great army of Danes; the leading man there was Jarl Úlfr Sprakaleggsson, as Þórarinn lof-tunga says.⁴⁶⁷

161. There was no doubt
that the Danes made
a splendid journey
with their sovereign;
there the jarl
was first of all,
and each man
who followed him
was more useful
than the last.

Glelognskviða 1
Hkr II 399

King Sveinn was a very young man, fair in appearance, not fierce in temperament or ambitious. His mother Álfifa, who was called in ríka (the Great) Álfifa, decided most things for the king, and everyone said [202] that she did damage in every situation, and for that reason the government was unpopular with the people of the land, and so much ill resulted from her counsels in Norway that people compared this reign with the time of Gunnhildr, which was the worst there had ever been in Norway before that. In the time of Álfifa fishermen paid rent for the sea. Many other outrageous things were done through great greed for money. A peaceful life was given to every man of this country and from abroad, and yet it was almost

⁴⁶⁶ Sveinn was son of Knútr by his English mistress Ælfifu, daughter of Ælfhelm, earl of Northumbria (not to be confused with Knútr's wife Emma, widow of Ethelred, who was also called Ælfifu) (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* II 211).

⁴⁶⁷ The verse and introductory phrase are not in *Fsk* (B). In *Heimskringla* this verse is assigned to *Glelognskviða* (Calm Sea Poem), composed by Þórarinn about Sveinn Álfifuson (*Hkr* II 399).

as if there was no peace for any man's property because of payments and taxes. King Knútr's power brought it about that there was no plundering or killing; but people did not give Álfifa credit for that.

CHAPTER 36

King Knútr Sveinsson, who was called *inn gamli Knútr* (the Old), was king over England then and had his seat there. King under him there was Haraldr, his son by Emma daughter of Richard.⁴⁶⁸ His second son was King Sveinn of Norway, and the third was called Hqrða-Knútr; he was fostered by Jarl Úlfr Sprakaleggsson. He was then ruling over Denmark.

It happened one summer that Jarl Úlfr went west to England to visit King Knútr. Jarl Úlfr and Queen Emma laid a plan between them, and the queen got hold of King Knútr's seal, and they had letters prepared which the jarl took away with him the following autumn. And when he came back from the west he called an assembly at Vébjörg, which people were to attend from all over Denmark.

When the assembly was opened, the jarl produced King Knútr's seal and the letters that went with it. He got his chaplain to read them out before the people, and named in them were all the most important leaders in Denmark. King Knútr sent his greetings to them, and to all the Danes as well:

'I wish my son Hqrða-Knútr to be accepted as king at the Vébjargaping; let all the land be confirmed by oath to him for possession and progress.'

This message [203] Jarl Úlfr supported; he spoke to it both long and fluently and said how burdensome it was for such a great and powerful land as they had to remain without a king; they were constantly at war with the Saxons and men of the Baltic, and even more with the Norwegians. This assembly concluded with Hqrða-Knútr being accepted as king over Denmark in accordance with the instructions in the letters and the advice of Jarl Úlfr, and he then

⁴⁶⁸ The Haraldr referred to here was Haraldr Harefoot, who in fact was (or claimed to be) another son of Knútr's by Álfifa (Aelfifu); Emma was the mother of Hqrða-Knútr (Hardacnut) (Loyn 1977, 96).

ruled the whole kingdom. Now in the spring this news of what the Danes had done came west to England.

CHAPTER 37

Now when King Knútr had learned the truth of this, he set out with a large force east from England and arrived in Denmark in the summer, and went to Hróiskelda in Sjáland. Jarl Úlfr came to meet him there, and in the evening the king was not willing to speak to him. In the morning the king still would not speak to the jarl and called his servant to him and told him to go and kill the jarl. The servant went and came straight back again.

Then the king said, 'Did you kill the jarl?'

'No, lord,' said he.

'What was the reason?' said the king.

'He was at matins.'

Then said the king to his knight, 'Take your sword and go and kill the jarl.'

He went and found the jarl in church, and at once struck him a death-blow, went away after that with his sword bloody, not doing anything about it, until he came inside to the king.

Then said the king, 'Did you kill the jarl?'

'Certainly I killed him.'

'Good,' said the king.

CHAPTER 38

The monks who had charge of the foundation in which the jarl was killed locked the church and declared an interdict on all the town and all the districts that belonged to it. [204] Now the king sent word to the monks and asked them to lift the interdict from the town and the people, and he said he would increase their revenues and donate to the church a large district with all the revenues that the king had had before, and that foundation was enhanced through this. Then the monks made peace with the king and all other men for this reason.

CHAPTER 39

Straight after that King Knútr announced that his letters and seal, with which the name of king had been given to his son (Hǫrða-) Knútr, had been taken against his will. Now he sent word to his son Knútr and to Sveinn Úlfsson. They both came before gamli Knútr and fell at his feet. Then Hǫrða-Knútr gave his father his seal, on which the name of king appeared, and they came to an agreement that Hǫrða-Knútr, and with him the twelve most powerful men in Denmark, would swear an oath to his father that he would not hold the realm of Denmark in any other way than subsidiary to his father; he would be a king subordinate to gamli Knútr, and on those terms he gave his son the title of king. Thus he would have the right to be called king if gamli Knútr was not in Denmark.

Sveinn Úlfsson stayed in Sweden for a long time, because Óláfr svenski was his mother's brother, and he was in great favour there.

CHAPTER 40

But straight after that Knútr gamli went west to England, and never came back to Denmark. He married his daughter Gunnhildr to Emperor Heinrekr mildi (Heinrich the Generous).⁴⁶⁹

King Knútr set out by sea from England on a pilgrimage to the Holy See; he and all his men who were there took staff and scrip [205] and walked south to Rome, and the emperor himself came to meet him and accompanied him all the way to the city of Rome. King Knútr established hospitals all along the route and gave money to church establishments, and it is said that he made provision for all the people who were in need of money on the way to Rome, so that no one who took that path to the south and back again needed to beg. King Knútr had taken with him many horses laden with gold and silver, and he took what he needed from the emperor's money. No man from northern lands who went on the road to Rome

⁴⁶⁹ Gunnhildr (Kunigunde) was married to Henry III the Black, later Holy Roman Emperor (1039–56; Gunnhildr died in 1038). The marriage was probably arranged in negotiations with Henry's father, the Emperor Conrad (referred to in the following paragraph), in Rome in 1027, in the course of which Conrad ceded Schleswig and territories north of the Eider to Denmark (Lawson 1993, 109).

has travelled in such state. The emperor went back with him into the northern parts of his empire. In this fashion the poet Sighvatr has spoken:

162. Desire⁴⁷⁰ to journey,
 staff in hand,
 came to the king
 who thought of war;
 Dear to the emperor,
 close to Peter,⁴⁷¹
 the road to Rome quickly
 the ruler shortened. *Knútsdrápa* 10
163. Few ring-givers⁴⁷²
 feet have measured
 the southward road,
*ruler most noble.*⁴⁷³ *Knútsdrápa* 11
Knýt 123

CHAPTER 41

[206] Sveinn Álfufuson was then king of Norway; then there came east from England Tryggvi, son of Óláfr Tryggvason and the English Gyða, and some said that he was the son of a priest, and not of the king. King Sveinn came against him, and they fought north of Jaðarr, at the place called Tungunes. Tryggvi threw two spears at once that day and said:

‘That’s how my father taught me to say mass.’

With this he was boasting that then he was more like Óláfr Tryggvason than the priest. Tryggvi fell there; he did no more brave deeds in Norway.

⁴⁷⁰ *farlystir*: correction for MS *farlaust*.

⁴⁷¹ *klúss Pétursi*: from the Latin ‘clusus’, ‘closely associated with Peter’, i.e. with the Pope.

⁴⁷² *hringdrífr*: ‘ring-distributor’, generous man, lord.

⁴⁷³ The last line of this half-verse is the second half of the refrain of which the first half begins verse 138.

CHAPTER 42

Somewhat later a very fully attended assembly was held at Niðaróss; at the meeting were King Sveinn and his mother Álfifa. Then great injustice was proposed to the *bændr*, and no one would either accept or reject any proposal. Then said Einarr þambarskelfir (Belly-Shaker), so that a great many men heard:

‘I was no friend of King Óláfr, and yet the Þrændir were no salesmen when they gave away their king and got a mare, and with it a foal, in exchange. This king cannot speak, and his mother wants only what is bad and, moreover, can achieve it in plenty.’

Now everyone who heard cried out and laughed at this, repeated it to each other and thought it well said.

Then said Álfifa, ‘Sit down, *bændr*, and listen to the king’s business, and don’t grumble like that any longer.’

And at once people were quiet. Einarr þambarskelfir got up and said that the *bændr* should go home, ‘and men have wasted their time coming here [207] for meetings with Álfifa both now and in the past. People might as well wait for injustice at home rather than all come together and listen to the words of one woman there in one place, these men who would not listen before to King Óláfr, who is now truly sainted. It is a most shameful deed that has been done, and it has now been punished heavily, so miserably has this people suffered since this government took power over the people. God must now wish that it will not last long, and yet it has already gone on long enough.’

Then Einarr left the assembly, and so all the crowd went home from this meeting, and yet it seemed to Álfifa that she had much more to say.

CHAPTER 43

That same winter it was requested a second time that the assembly should be held, but no one was willing to attend the assembly. Now the friends of King Sveinn suspected that the Þrændir were about to betray their king again, and therefore King Sveinn travelled to the south of the country. King Knútr had sent men to Eggjar-Kálfr (Árnason), with the message that he should have Norwegian axes sent to him. Kálfr answered in this way: he said he would send none

to him, but he would give his son Sveinn so many that he would not think there was any shortage.

CHAPTER 44

After King Sveinn's departure from Þrándheimr the Þrændir consulted among themselves. The best and most powerful men put themselves forward and left the country; the first of these men, Eggjar-Kálfr and Einarr þambarskelfir, went east to Garðaríki and asked King Jarizleifr to give them Magnús, son of Óláfr inn helgi. The king was very reluctant to do this, fearing that they would betray him as they had his father. Then twelve of the best men in that troop swore oaths, as Bjarni gullbráðrskáld says:

[208] 164. Kálfr showed warlike Magnús

the way to territories—

the country you caused

the king to gain—from Garðar.

you helped the young prince have

the inheritance he came for;

swift Sveinn thereafter

was settled only in Denmark.

Kálfsflokkur 6

Hkr III 12

They made a vow to King Jarizleifr that they would support King Magnús in Norway and follow him faithfully and strengthen his power.

CHAPTER 45

With this they went from the east, and Kálfr and Einarr became Magnús's counsellors and foster-fathers. They were travelling during the winter all the way to the sea, and they embarked on ships and sailed over to Sweden, and when they came to Sigtún, they left their ships and went across Sweden and so to Norway by whatever routes were available and came down in the north of Þrándheimr. So said Arnórr jarlaskáld:⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁴ Arnórr was an Icclander, son of Þórðr Kolbeinsson, also a poet (see note 241 above). He acquired his nickname 'jarlaskáld' as poet of the jarls Rognvaldr Brúason

165. Now I look—let gold-staves⁴⁷⁵ *Magnúsdrápa* 1
 listen—to tell men the actions *Hkr* III 3
 of the strife-ready⁴⁷⁶ stainer *Mork* 19
 of sword-blades,⁴⁷⁷ for I know them amply.
 [209] The snake's seat's despiser⁴⁷⁸
 was still not eleven
 when the bold friend of Hqrðar⁴⁷⁹
 warships readied from Garðar.

CHAPTER 46

Now as soon as people heard that a son of King Óláfr inn helgi—Magnús—had come into Þrándheimr, men came to him and swore oaths to him, including those who had opposed Óláfr. Then the Eyrarþing assembly was held, and men came to it from all the *shires* in Þrándheimr. Then Magnús was accepted as king and received a retinue and ships.

Then King Sveinn heard news of this, and at once sent out a summons to war, held an assembly, demanded support, called up a *levy*, told of his problem: that the Þrændir had adopted another king, and he asked the *bændr* to give support to his cause and respond. Then many *bændr* replied that they would not willingly fight against the son of Óláfr inn helgi, and some were silent, but few said that they would go with Sveinn.

The king said, 'I am very young, I have little skill in speaking, but I have no need to seek the agreement of those men who say in my hearing that they will not fight against Magnús; some are silent, but their wishes are the same as the others, and we cannot count on this army as a fighting force.'

The king concluded his address by saying that he would not fight against King Magnús if he could not get more reliable support than was present there then.

and Þorfinnr Sigurðarson of Orkney, and was one of the most important poets of the kings Magnús Ólafsson and Haraldr harðráði.

⁴⁷⁵ *seims stafar*: 'staves of gold', men.

⁴⁷⁶ *rógors* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *roghs hyrs*.

⁴⁷⁷ *hneitis eggja rjóðandi*: 'reddener of the wounder's (i.e. sword's) edges', warrior.

⁴⁷⁸ *ormsetrs hati*: 'hater of the dragon's seat', hater, i.e. giver of gold, generous lord. *hati* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *bati*.

⁴⁷⁹ *Hqrða vinr*: 'friend of Hordalanders', king of Norway.

Then the king's chieftains, Danish men, held long discussions [210] and all came to the same decision, and said that the Norwegians had shamefully broken faith with King Sveinn, and considered that there was nothing else for it but to go south to Denmark and raise troops from there with the support of Hǫrða-Knútr or their father, gamli Knútr, and that plan was followed. Then King Sveinn and his mother and all the Danes who had been in Norway with them went to Denmark.

CHAPTER 47

King Magnús took power as widely over all of Norway as his father had done, gained the land without battle and with the consent of all the subjects, both powerful and otherwise, and of all the common people, and they all preferred rather to be free than to suffer the oppression of the Danes any longer. About this Arnórr jarla-skáld⁴⁸⁰ composed:

166. From the high-king's great fury
fled the outstanding leader;
the howler, hater of arm-ice,⁴⁸¹
hurried from our wealth-friend.⁴⁸²
Not long the able king let
the lord enjoy Norway;
from his father's legacy,
fight-bold, Sveinn he drove out.

Magnúsdrápa 4
Mork 21

[211] The following summer Sveinn Álfifuson caught a mortal illness in Denmark, and that same winter gamli Knútr died in England, and was buried at Winchester. Then his son Haraldr succeeded him in England,⁴⁸³ but in Denmark his son Hǫrða-Knútr was king. He had a great dispute with King Magnús, and considered him to have

⁴⁸⁰ In *Morkinskinna* the verse is attributed to 'Skúli'.

⁴⁸¹ *armsvells hati*: 'hater of arm-ice', giver away of silver (worn as arm-ring), generous lord. It has been suggested (E. A. Kock, *NV* §817) that the following word *gellir* 'howler' be read as part of this kenning, but the interpretation requires emendation and is not convincing.

⁴⁸² *auðvinr*: 'wealth-friend', generous lord.

⁴⁸³ Knútr died in 1035 and was succeeded in England by his son Haraldr Harefoot (see note 468).

established himself in his land which had belonged to his father gamli Knútr. King Magnús said that he was obliged to take vengeance on the Danes and on the Knýtlingar (descendants of Knútr), in the first place for the betrayal of his father King Óláfr, and also for the seizure of his land that had taken place when he fled from the country because of the tyranny and hostility of King Knútr; he said that he wanted to avenge all this with the help of his father, King Óláfr inn helgi, and with the support of his people. Then they each caused a great deal of damage in the other's kingdom. That irked both the Danes and the Norwegians; they chose the best men from both sides and sought a settlement, and a meeting was arranged so that the kings were to meet by the Elfr, where earlier kings had held meetings and made peace between themselves. At this meeting the kings made peace, King Magnús, son of King Óláfr inn helgi, and Hqrða-Knútr. They called that peace 'perpetual peace'; that peace was to last for all time. Then both kings swore oaths that each should stand to the other in the place of a brother in all their dealings, and that peace was to last between the kingdoms. It was also included in the terms of the oath that if King Magnús died childless and Hqrða-Knútr lived longer, then he would take possession, in peace and goodwill, of all the realm of the king of Norway. It was also stipulated that if Hqrða-Knútr died childless, King Magnús would have the whole kingdom and be his rightful heir as if he were his brother born. Twelve of the most powerful men from each kingdom swore oaths that they would keep to the settlement as long as any of them lived, and support in power the king who lived longer. This peace was made after the model of that which [212] gamli Knútr and Játvarðr (Edward) made in England. And then they parted in agreement.

CHAPTER 48

King Magnús became a powerful, popular man, fully mature in wisdom and strength earlier than in years, and handsome in appearance. The men who had been friends of Óláfr inn helgi spoke a great deal against the Þrœndir who had been in opposition to King Óláfr, and many noble men were named in this connection. It was also said to King Magnús that it was hardly advisable to have them at his table, and some present at confidential talks, and for him to

make men such as Kálfr Árnason his counsellors. Soon the king became hardened against the Þrændir. Then Kálfr and certain other noble men left the country because of the king's anger. Some paid a great deal of money, and some lost all their possessions. Then the *bændr* discussed among themselves whether this king 'seems not to know how to behave reasonably towards us'.

They considered that they had sometimes taken strong action when the causes were less, and said that it would be a great pity if the Þrændir were to have less justice than other men or the people of the rest of the country, and declared to be dead and gone their forebears who had not allowed kings to get away with more than the law allowed, and said that Þrándheimr had always been the head of Norway, 'and now it is turned into a place for plundering. Our kinsmen were originally the most powerful men in Norway, but now we have to be the slaves of the king's *sheriffs*.'

The king's friends heard this talk and feared for his authority. Some wise men came together and discussed the matter among themselves. They urged each other to tell the king what was being said, but no one dared to do it himself. Then they agreed on this plan, that they must choose someone by lot; they proceeded with the drawing of lots, and the lot which was drawn belonged to the poet Sighvatr; he had long served King Óláfr, and had now entered the service of his son King Magnús. [213] Then Sighvatr composed a *flokkr* about King Magnús, and this is part of it:⁴⁸⁴

167. Unless people are lying,
landowners say their law is
other, and worse, than earlier
in Úlfasund⁴⁸⁵ you promised.

Bersöglisvísur 8
Hkr III 28
Mork 28

This is also in it:

168. Take warning, thief-toppler,⁴⁸⁶
from talk of men that travels

Bersöglisvísur 13
Hkr III 29

⁴⁸⁴ This poem is named as *Bersöglisvísur* (Plain-Speaking Verses) in *Heimskringla*, where nine verses are cited (*Hkr* III 26); there are sixteen in *Morkinskinna*, where it is called *Bersöglisflokkr* (*Mork* 26).

⁴⁸⁵ The reference to promises made by Magnús in Úlfasund (Ulvesund in Nordfjord) is obscure.

⁴⁸⁶ *þjófs veltir*: 'one who brings down a thief', just ruler.

hither; the hand must be
held back⁴⁸⁷ by moderation.

Mork 28

And this further:

169. Who urges you to slaughter
your subjects' cattle, warrior?⁴⁸⁸
it is too rash for a ruler
to ravage his own country.
[214] No one had thus admonished
a young ruler before.
I think, prince, your people weary
of plunder; men are angry.
170. Who urges you, ruler
harsh in war, to go back on
what you have said? Slender
steel you often put to the test.
A king of men, rich in capture,
must keep his promises.
To renege on pledges never,
noise-increaser,⁴⁸⁹ befits you.
171. There's danger when, heads drooping,⁴⁹⁰
down under their mantles
thingmen stick noses; silence
has descended on people.
[215] There's a threat when greyheads— *3GT* 30, 112 (2nd half)
this we must plan against—
all intend opposing,
as I hear, the ruler.
- Bersöglisvísur* 11
Hkr III 29
Mork 29
- Bersöglisvísur* 10
Hkr III 28–29
Mork 29
- Bersöglisvísur* 12
Hkr III 30
Mork 29
Ágr 33

In this poem could be heard such admonitions to the king as that he must keep the laws that his father had established, and also how he had made peace with all men when he was given the title of king, even if they had previously opposed King Óláfr. Now because the king was a wise man, and moreover there were many at hand to support Sighvatr's admonitions, the king allowed peace to be made again with the *bændr*, kept the laws according to justice and forgave

⁴⁸⁷ *stytta*: literally 'shortened'.

⁴⁸⁸ *hjáldrgegnir*: 'causer of noise (of battle)', warrior.

⁴⁸⁹ *hjáldrmognuðr*: 'increaser of noise (of battle)', warrior.

⁴⁹⁰ v. 171 does not occur in *Fsk* (B).

all the people of the land who had previously been his enemies. Then all the people of the country began to love him, and he was called Magnús inn góði (the Good). He brought Rognvaldr Brúsason to power west in Orkney, and gave him the title of jarl, and throughout his time there was great discord between Rognvaldr and his father's brother Þorfinnr, as is told in the sagas of the jarls.⁴⁹¹

In the seventh year of the reign of King Magnús, Hǫrða-Knútr, who at that time was king over both England and Denmark, died west in England. Two years earlier his brother Haraldr had died; then Hǫrða-Knútr had taken over all that realm. After Hǫrða-Knútr's death, in the same year, Játvarðr góði (Edward the Good), son of King Aðalraðr (Ethelred), Hǫrða-Knútr's brother, was adopted as king of England. Their mother was Emma, daughter of Ríkarðr Rúðujarl (jarl of Rouen). Játvarðr was adopted as king on Easter Sunday.⁴⁹²

When King Magnús heard of Hǫrða-Knútr's death he was sitting in his hall. After the meal he stood up at once and [216] said:

‘May God and the blessed King Óláfr bear witness that I will take possession of all the Danish empire or else die in the attempt.’

So says Arnórr jarlaskáld:

172. Enormous eloquence

the jarls' lord⁴⁹³ was endowed with;
what the soother of she-wolf's sorrow⁴⁹⁴
said, was matched in action:
in the cruel clash, said the ruler,
of carved shields,⁴⁹⁵ under the raven's
claw he would fall on his face,
fated, or have Denmark.

Magnúsdrápa 5

Hkr III 32–33

Mork 34

The very same summer, Magnús went with a large force from Norway south to Denmark and entered Limafjörðr, then held on to Vébjörg

⁴⁹¹ This reference, which is also found in *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 31), is probably to some version(s) of *Orkneyinga saga*. See Bjarni Aðalbarnarson 1937, 151–52.

⁴⁹² Edward the Confessor was the half-brother of Hǫrða-Knútr; their mother Emma, daughter of Richard Duke of Normandy, had been married first to King Ethelred ('the Unready') and, after his death, to Knútr.

⁴⁹³ *jarla dróttinn*: 'lord of jarls', king. *jarla* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *jefra* (B), *varla* (A).

⁴⁹⁴ *ylgjar angrtalir*: 'beguiler of the sorrow of the she-wolf', warrior, who feeds carrion to wolves.

⁴⁹⁵ *grafnings gnyr*: 'clash of the engraved (shield)', battle.

and was adopted as king there at the Vébjargapíng. He travelled around during the summer and imposed taxes on the land, and governed according to religion and the laws, and appointed chieftains over the land during the winter.

When King Magnús had taken possession of the realm of Denmark according to the oaths that he and Hǫrða-Knútr had sworn, he sent men with letters west to England to see King Játvarðr, and in the letters was the message that King Magnús and Hǫrða-Knútr had sworn that one of them was to succeed to all the power of the other, [217] and the difference in the time of their deaths had brought it about then that King Magnús was heir to all the dominion of Hǫrða-Knútr, and King Magnús said that he wanted to know from King Játvarðr whether he would need to fight for England, or whether he would do as the Danes had done and honour this lawful agreement, and he said that England, as well as Denmark, was his possession.

When King Játvarðr heard these letters he at once had others drawn up in reply. In these letters, he first related that:

in my childhood I lost my father, King Aðalráðr, who ruled this land like his forebears before him, and because of my youth my brother Játmundr took the title of king before me; and I knew that to be the law of this land. Then Knútr came into this land with a Danish army and fought for our patrimony. So it came about that he became king over England with my brother Játmundr. Soon afterwards my brother Játmundr became fatally ill, and then Knútr took over the whole kingdom. And though I was the son of King Aðalráðr and brother of King Játmundr and son of Queen Emma, I relinquished that power to my stepfather Knútr, and I preferred to trust to God's grace to ordain for me such power as I was fit to hold, but I would not destroy the lives or souls of Christian men for the sake of it. But when King Knútr's life and rule in this world had come to an end, then the choice for king lay between his sons—Haraldr first—and the situation as before was that I was dispossessed and excluded from all the possessions of our forebears, and I was content with that for as long as God willed it, and yet it was only a short time before Haraldr died. Hǫrða-Knútr, who was then ruling over Denmark, and who was a son of inn gamli Knútr, thought himself not as great as he wished until he had become king over both England and Denmark, and so it happened for the fourth time that there was a change of rulers that left me with no better rank than that of any knight, and no one will say that I served my brother Knútr worse or with more arrogance than those knights who had no trace of royalty on either side of their [218] genealogy. Next King Knútr died, and it was decided by all the leaders in England that I be given the title of king. Then I was consecrated king by the

archbishop, and enthroned. At my consecration I made a vow to uphold God's justice and the laws of the land, and rather to die for justice than to suffer unjust oppression of this land. And so I am now appointed over this land on behalf of God and the laws of the land to mete out justice to all and punish violence. Now, King Magnús, since you want to take from me this land which is my heritage because you think you already have too few possessions, when you are ruling over your inheritance from your father, the realm of Norway, and have now taken possession of the Danish realm; now you covet my kingdom, and if you come with an army to attack me, it is more than likely that I will not gather an army to resist you, but you can never be called king in England, and you will never be granted any allegiance there before you put an end to my life.

CHAPTER 49

When King Magnús heard this message from King Játvarðr and how much distress he had suffered before he became king, and what a fine man he was and how great a friend of God, King Magnús abandoned this enterprise. He declared it to be true that his kingdom was ample if God was willing to allow him to enjoy it, rather than for it to increase only in such a way that he lost more in exchange, and what was worth much more, what he might expect from God, if he were to kill such a man to deprive him of his patrimony.

The third summer after this, King Magnús went to Norway, and as he lay in the Elfr by Konungahella, there came to him Sveinn, son of Jarl Úlfr and of Ástriðr, daughter of Sveinn tjúguskegg and of Sigríðr, daughter of Skoglar-Tósti, who had previously been married to Eiríkr inn sigrsæli (the Victorious), king of the Swedes. Ástriðr had the same father as gamli Knútr, king of England, and the same mother as King Óláfr of Sweden. [219] Sveinn Úlfsson had stayed for some time in Sweden with his kinsman King Qnundr Ólafsson.⁴⁹⁶ He sought friendship with King Magnús and asked to have some fiefdom in his kingdom and offered him his allegiance and said he wanted to be his man; he told him how powerful his kinsmen had been, although now he was destitute, and said that he would be faithful to him in all circumstances. And the king believed his fair

⁴⁹⁶ They were first cousins; Sveinn's mother was Ástriðr, half-sister of Qnundr's father Óláfr.

words because he himself was without guile, and he believed the words of Sveinn in the light of his own good faith. King Magnús had Sveinn swear oaths to him at a shrine containing holy relics, that he would be faithful and true to him and support all his rule in every way. So says the poet Þjóðólfr:

173. Úlfr's son himself was east
in Elfr, and made fair promises.
There Sveinn consented
to swear, hand on shrine laying,
Óláfr's son ordained for him
oaths, lord of Skánungar;⁴⁹⁷
less temporary their treaty's
term should have been.

Magnúsflokkur 5

Hkr III 38

Mork 36

King Magnús went back to Denmark the same summer, and stayed there almost until winter, and before he left Jótland he bestowed the title of jarl on Sveinn Úlfsson, and appointed him as defender of Jótland, to guard the land against Saxons and Wends, who were doing a great deal of damage in the Danish realm.

Then Einarr þambarskelfir said to the king, 'Too mighty a jarl, too mighty a jarl,⁴⁹⁸ [220] foster-son!'

Then the king answered angrily, 'You think I have no judgement of my own; some you think too mighty to be jarl, and others not man enough.'

King Magnús stayed in Norway for the winter. That same winter Jarl Sveinn had the Vëbjargaping called, and at that assembly Þorkell geysa (Gush) gave Sveinn the title of king over all the Danish realm. After that Sveinn gathered a great force for himself and went through the country taking it under his control.

When King Magnús heard news of this, he ordered out a full *levy* in Norway and got a very large force. King Magnús was then sailing Visundinn (the Bison), which was the biggest of all ships. It had belonged to the blessed King Óláfr, his father. Then King Magnús went south to Denmark, and when Sveinn heard what a large army King Magnús had, he dared not engage with the force he had in battle against King Magnús, and retreated east into Sweden to see

⁴⁹⁷ *Skónunga gramr*: 'king of the people of Skåne', i.e. king of Norway.

⁴⁹⁸ *offarl*.

his kinsman King Qnundr. King Magnús went south to Jótland with his army, and all the people submitted to him. He had many men killed. Some who had previously submitted to Sveinn fled their ancestral lands, and others bought themselves off with money. Then King Magnús sent his army back to Norway, while he sailed with his own troop to Vinðland to win back the jarldom which the king of the Danes had ruled at Jóm. On this expedition he won Jómsborg. That same summer he sailed back to Denmark and met Vikings by Ré in Vestland, fought them and was victorious.

That same autumn King Magnús was located in Jótland and heard that an army of Wends had risen against him. He at once sent a call to arms throughout his kingdom and went against them night and day as forcefully as he could, for the Wends were burning everything wherever they went. King Magnús encountered them in battle north of Heiðaboer, and the difference in numbers was no less than sixty heathens to one Christian. Then there was hostile murmuring among the Danes who said that the king meant to bring them into an impossible situation. The Norwegians [221] also thought ill of their lot, having to put their lives so severely at risk and defend the land of the Danes, although the Danes had previously betrayed the king when he left Denmark. Now the king thought ill of the grumbling and fear in his troop, and yet he said that he would not flee his own lands before heathens if he could get any support from his men or from the conscripted army; he said that since he was king in Denmark as well as Norway he would defend Denmark with spear-point and blade even if Christian men meant to attack it, but twice as hard against a heathen force, so that Christians should not be under the rule of heathens. At that time his brother-in-law, Duke Ótti (Otto) of Brunswick, came to him with his troop and urged the king to fight, and the king was very glad of that, especially because he had already decided not to flee before the heathens.

CHAPTER 50

The following night King Magnús and his men lay under their shields at Hlýrskógsheiðr, for the enemy army was expected there then, and King Magnús fell asleep, and his father Óláfr inn helgi appeared to him in a dream and said:

‘Stand up and draw up your troops; you have an ample force to

fight against heathens. I will come to fight with you, and when you hear my trumpet sounded, you shall advance to battle.’

Then the king awoke and told his dream to all his army, ‘and you can know for a fact that the blessed King Óláfr will fight on our side.’

A little later they all heard a sound like a bell ringing up in the air, and all the Norwegians thought they recognised the sound of Gløð ringing north in Niðaróss.⁴⁹⁹ Now they all took courage at this miracle, so that no one was afraid no matter whether they were faced by many or few. Next they also saw where the Wendish army advanced. Then King Magnús took off his coat of mail and went in his silken tunic without a shield; in his hand he held Hel, the axe [222] that had belonged to his father.⁵⁰⁰ Then the king waited for no one else, for he was the first man to engage with the army, and he struck on both sides. That was the eve of Michaelmas. There was little fighting before the Wends fled, and the Christians pursued them in flight and spread themselves out behind them as the horde tried to get away. The carnage was so heavy that for the distance of a *league* no man could put a foot between the bodies, and every stream was dammed and could not find its course, and no man knows the tally of the men who fell on the heathens’ side. So says the poet Þjóðólfr:⁵⁰¹

174. I think in the host hundredfold
Haraldr’s nephew was standing—
the raven hoped for a hearty
hunger-quenching—foremost.
Routed Wends lay spread widely;
there were, where Magnús battled,
hewn dead bodies hiding
the heath for a *league*’s distance.

Magnúsflokkur 7
Hkr III 44
Mork 46

This battle is the most famous there has been in the northern lands because of the number who fell, and most of all because such great miracles were done by the blessed King Óláfr as to make so small

⁴⁹⁹ The *Separate Saga of St Óláfr* (*Hkr* II 448) and *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 43) explain that King Óláfr had given the bell Gløð (‘Glad’) to St Clemen’s church in Niðaróss.

⁵⁰⁰ Hel was the pagan goddess of the dead; see note 504.

⁵⁰¹ Þjóðólfr Arnórsson. In *Morkinskinna* the verse is attributed to Sighvatr.

a force victorious against such a great army, losing no man from their side, and the king himself advanced against the heathens' weapons without a shield and cut down his enemies, and no one dared to attack him with weapons, as Arnórr jarlaskáld said:

- [223] 175. With wide axe went forward *Magnúsdrápa* 10
 the unwearied ruler, *Hkr* III 43–44
 —beside the Hqrðar's lord⁵⁰² resounded *Mork* 46–47
 sword-clash—and threw off armour,
 when with both hands the hero
 held the shaft; the shaping
 lord of heaven⁵⁰³ allotted
 land; Hel⁵⁰⁴ clove pallid skulls.

King Magnús spent the winter in Jótland. Then Sveinn Úlfsson came to Denmark with his army, and headed south to meet King Magnús; they met south of Áróss in Jótland a little before Christmas. That was a short battle because Sveinn had the smaller force. King Magnús was victorious, while Sveinn fled, and the greater part of his army was killed, and he went to Sweden. So says Þjóðólfr:

176. The decisive jarl, off *Magnúsflokkr* 22
 his empty ship, fled from *Hkr* III 57–58
 mortal combat, where Magnús *Mork* 51
 made Sveinn's flight difficult.
 The king of war had coloured
 crimson the wounder's blade;⁵⁰⁵
 blood spurted on the sharpened
 sword; the lord fought for lands.

[224] This shows it to be true that King Magnús and his men called Sveinn 'jarl', though he called himself 'king', as did his friends. The following summer Sveinn came to Denmark again with warships. Then King Magnús advanced against him off Skáni; they met at the place called Helganes and placed their ships side by side for

⁵⁰² *Hqrða hilmir*: 'lord of the people of Hordaland', i.e. king of Norway.

⁵⁰³ *skapvörðr himins*: 'the creating or natural guardian of heaven', God.

⁵⁰⁴ *Hel*: As mentioned above, this was the name of Magnús's axe which had belonged to his father King Óláfr; see also *Hkr* III 43. Hel was the name of the pagan goddess of death and the underworld; a sense acknowledged in this verse by the punning juxtaposition of the name with the reference to heaven.

⁵⁰⁵ *hneitis egg*: 'wounder's, striker's edge', sword's blade.

battle late in the evening. The battle lasted all night, and its end came when Sveinn fled; he managed to get ashore with all those who escaped with their lives and abandoned all the ships and the greater part of the army. So says Arnórr:

177. I have heard it called widely *Magnúsdrápa* 12
 Helganes, where many *Hkr* III 56–57
 elks of the wave⁵⁰⁶ the well-known *Mork* 52 (1st half)
 wolf-gladdener⁵⁰⁷ emptied.
 As dusk came down, the ship-tree⁵⁰⁸ *Skáldsk* I 65 (2nd half)
 ordered shields be set together.
 All the autumn night the rain of
 the ogress of strife-clouds⁵⁰⁹ lasted.
178. King strict with Skánungar, *Magnúsdrápa* 14
 you seized all the warships *Hkr* III 58
 of Björn's brother;⁵¹⁰ at the *Mork* 51
 best moment men rowed there.

[225] Then Sveinn fled inland back to Gautland to meet the king of the Swedes, while Magnús went ashore on Skáni with his troop, fought against the *bændr* and killed there many of his enemies, as Arnórr jarlaskáld says:

179. A strong assault the ruler, *Magnúsdrápa* 16
 squanderer of wealth,⁵¹¹ launched *Mork* 50
 inland; the lord of Hǫrðar⁵¹²
 let sword-breeze blow⁵¹³ on Skáni.

Then he went south onto Falstr, as Arnórr says:

180. For deceit not sparingly *Magnúsdrápa* 17
 the sovereign repaid the Danes; *Hkr* III 62

⁵⁰⁶ *vágs elgr*: 'elk of the wave', ship.

⁵⁰⁷ *vargteitir*: 'wolf-cheerer', warrior.

⁵⁰⁸ *reggbúss*: 'box-tree of the ship', seafarer.

⁵⁰⁹ *rógskjja rýjar regn*: 'rain of the troll-wife of strife-clouds'; strife-clouds are shields; the troll-wife of shields is the axe; rain of the axe is battle.

⁵¹⁰ *Bjarnar bróðir*: Sveinn. His brother Björn is mentioned in *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 223) and in *Knyttlinga saga* (*Knyt* 97).

⁵¹¹ *aflógandi*: 'inheritance-squanderer', generous lord.

⁵¹² *Hørða hilmir*: 'lord of Hordalanders', i.e. king of Norway.

⁵¹³ *hjørpey*: 'thawing wind of the sword', battle.

the king, high of courage,
caused the fall of Falstr-dwellers.

Mork 52

Then he turned back, put in by Fjón and made raids there, and killed there many of the men who had treasonably deprived him of the land. So says Arnórr:

181. Next, on Fjón bright banners—
the band's lord⁵¹⁴ attacked the country;
people paid for robbing him—
[226] the painter of mailcoats⁵¹⁵ reddened.
Let men remember which
commander aged twenty⁵¹⁶ so
benefited the black raven;
a brave heart the king got.

Magnúsdrápa 18

Hkr III 63

Mork 52

This refers to the fact that King Magnús was to turn twenty the following spring.

In the summer when sixteen years had passed since the fall of the blessed King Óláfr, King Magnús lay with his army off Skáni. He had been king for ten years, and for five of those he had been king over both Norway and Denmark. Then there came to him Haraldr, son of Sigurðr sýr and of Ásta, daughter of Guðbrandr, brother of the blessed King Óláfr. The father of Sigurðr sýr was Hálfðan, son of Sigurðr hrísi; he was a son of Haraldr inn hárfagri. These three paternal ancestors had been petty kings in Upplönd. Haraldr Sigurðarson had three *longships* as well as the one which he commanded himself. Above it was a sail of this kind: it was of fine cloth woven with gold thread, and made of double thickness so that neither those who were behind nor those in front of it could see the less beautiful side of the cloth. On that ship were dragons' heads all decorated with gold, and it is said that there has never been a single ship in the Northern lands adorned with so much gold or precious stones or fine cloth or many other kinds of treasure.

⁵¹⁴ *dróttar gramr*: 'lord of the retinue', king.

⁵¹⁵ *hringserks lituðr*: 'colourer of the ring-shirt', warrior, who reddens armour with blood.

⁵¹⁶ *annan tög fylldi*: 'completed a second decade', reached twenty. *annan* is the reading of some MSS of *Heimskringla*; others, and *Fsk*, have *annarr*.

CHAPTER 51

[227] When Óláfr the blessed king had fallen at Stiklarstaðir, his brother Haraldr and Rognvaldr Brúsason and many men with them left the country and went east at the beginning of the winter to Hólmgarðr to see King Jarizleifr, and he welcomed them, as Valgarðr at Völlr, who composed poetry about Haraldr, says:⁵¹⁷

182. You wiped the weapon's mouth⁵¹⁸ *Drápa on Haraldr harðráði* 1
 when, king, you stopped fighting. *Hkr* III 69–70
 You rendered the raven full with *Mork* 58
 raw flesh; the wolf howled on the hill.
 But, prince—a more prominent
 peace-breaker⁵¹⁹ than you I know not—
 you were east the next year,
 aggressive king, in Garðar.

King Jarizleifr had always had Norwegian and Swedish men with him; at that time Jarl Rognvaldr Úlfsson had died, and Jarl Eilífr had taken over his authority. He also had many Norwegians with him and paid them for their services. That jarldom was granted in order that the jarl should defend the king's domain against heathens. King Jarizleifr appointed Haraldr as second in command over his army and paid a wage to all his men,⁵²⁰ as the poet Þjóðólfr says:⁵²¹

- [228] 183. Where Eilífr had sway *Runhent poem on Haraldr harðráði* 1
 in the same way *Hkr* III 70
 did two chiefs group *Mork* 58
 their wedge-shaped troop.

⁵¹⁷ In *Heimskringla* and *Morkinskinna* the verse is attributed to Þolhverkr Arnórsson, who in *Fagskinna* is cited as author of vv. 201 and 204, and said to be the brother of Þjóðólfr (Arnórsson). At this point *Morkinskinna* comments on the origin of the narrative of Haraldr's adventures: 'the story of Haraldr's travels is what was told by Haraldr himself and the men who accompanied him' (*Mork* 58).

⁵¹⁸ *mækis munnr*: 'mouth of the sword', sword-blade.

⁵¹⁹ *fríðskerðir*: 'peace-harmer', warrior.

⁵²⁰ For Haraldr's service of Yaroslav, see Blöndal 1978, 54–55.

⁵²¹ The end-rhymed verse-form, of which Snorri Sturluson lists a number of varieties, is known as *runhent* (*Háttatal*; Snorri Sturluson 1991, 33–94, 86–88). Four other half-verses in the same metre attributed to Þjóðólfr, and presumably belonging to the same poem, are preserved in other texts.

Haraldr stayed there for a long time and fought many battles, and Jarizleifr treated him very well. Then Haraldr became eager to travel out to Miklagarðr. At that time there ruled in Miklagarðr Queen Zóe in ríka (Zoë the Powerful), who had governed the kingdom of Miklagarðr with seven emperors,⁵²² and with her at that time ruled the man who was called Mikael kátalaktús (Michael Katallaktos).⁵²³ Then Haraldr made a request of the emperor and the queen, saying that he wanted to take paid service there with all his men, and this was granted to him, and they were told that they were all to sail on *galleys*. At this time the Greek king's fleet was commanded by Georgius (Georgios Maniaces), a kinsman of the queen; the Norwegians called him Gyrgir.⁵²⁴ And when they came out into the islands of Greece, Haraldr often went away from the fleet with his men and looked for booty for himself, and most of the Væringjar (Varangians)⁵²⁵ accompanied him. He always went into battle in such a way, whether they had to attack ships or fortifications or go ashore, that he and all his troop were either to fall or win the victory. And when he was with the whole army he always made his men go in front.

It happened on one occasion when they put up their land-tents that Haraldr and his troop took a camping place on higher ground than the other tents. Then the leader of the Greek army came up and told [229] the Væringjar to move their tents away and said that the Greeks were going to put theirs there. Haraldr answered and said that it was not the rule for the Væringjar to move into a little hollow below the level of the Greeks' feet, but Gyrgir said that he would set up his own tent first, with all his troop around him.

⁵²² *stólkonungar*, 'throne-kings'; the title *stólkonungr* is used in *Fagrskinna* specifically for the Byzantine emperor alongside the term *Grikkjakonungr*, which is the only one used by *Heimskringla* and *Morkinskinna*. Verses by Þórarinn Skeggjason and Þjóðólfr Árnason use the word *stólpengill* 'throne-king' specifically of the emperor (vv. 189, 190). According to Blöndal *stólkonungar* was a corruption of the Old Russian *stolnyi knyazi* 'great princes' used of the rulers of Kiev and Novgorod (1978, 3).

⁵²³ Michael IV Katallaktos reigned 1034–41. The marital career of the Empress Zoë is exaggerated: she was previously married to Romanos III Argyros (1028–1034) and subsequently to Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–1055).

⁵²⁴ The distinguished career of Georgios Maniaces, 'the most notable Byzantine general between Basil II and Alexius Comnenus' (Blöndal 1978, 65), is clear from Greek, Latin and French sources. He is unlikely to have been related to the queen; see Blöndal 1978, 65–67.

⁵²⁵ The Varangians were a body of Scandinavian mercenaries in the service of the Byzantine emperors, most famously the elite Varangian guard, which was established around 988 and was still in existence at the fall of Constantinople in 1204 (Pritsak 1993; for the origin of the term see Blöndal 1978, 4–7).

Then Haraldr answered, 'If you are commander of the Greek king's army, I am commander of the Væringjar.'⁵²⁶

Then both sides wanted to take to their weapons. Then wise men came forward and asked them to come to terms and settle things as equally as possible between them, and asked them to draw lots to decide which should put up their tents first, the Greeks or the Væringjar, and ride or row in front or put into harbour first. Then lots were prepared, and each commander marked his lot.

Then Haraldr said to Gyrgir: 'Let me see what mark is on your lot so that we don't mark them both in the same way.'

Gyrgir showed him his lot. Then Haraldr marked his lot with a mark so similar that it was impossible to tell which was which, and they threw them both into the skirt of the commander's cloak, and Haraldr drew a lot and said as he drew it:

'The owner of this one shall put up his tent first, ride in front, row in front, and put into harbour first,' looked at the lot and said, 'This is the lot of us Væringjar,' and flung the lot out into the sea beside them.

Then said Gyrgir, 'Why did you not let me see the lot?'

Haraldr replied, 'If you did not see the one which I drew, look at the one that is left to see whether your mark is on it or not.'

Then the lot was examined and Gyrgir's mark was on it. Such dealings showed how ambitious and concerned with appearances Haraldr was.

Now they went raiding during the summer, and then the Væringjar began to say that things would go much better if Haraldr alone had command of the army, and said that Gyrgir had done nothing to achieve glory while he was in sole command. He said in reply that the Væringjar were not willing to give him their service; he told them to go elsewhere and then he would achieve whatever he was capable of. Then Haraldr left him, and with him went the Væringjar and all the Latin men,⁵²⁷ but Gyrgir took the Greek army. [230] Then it became clear what each of them was capable of: Haraldr

⁵²⁶ Haraldr's service in Byzantium is attested in contemporary sources, including the treatise 'Advice for an Emperor' attributed to Cecaumenos, but his role was more obscure than is suggested by this claim to leadership and by other Norse accounts of his exploits (Pritsak 1993; Blöndal 1978, 57–58).

⁵²⁷ *Latínunenn*: According to Greek and Slavic sources there were Franks among the Varangians (Pritsak 1993), perhaps the 'Latins' or 'Romans'—speakers of a Romance language—mentioned here.

always won victory and plenty of booty, while the Greeks went back to Miklagarðr, except for the group who wanted to make money, and they went over to Haraldr and took him as leader over them. Then Haraldr went with his army west to Africa, and raised many troops in the territory which is part of Africa. It is related according to his own report that he captured eighty cities there. Some were surrendered into his power, some he broke into or burned. So said Þjóðólfr:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>184. You can say that eighty cities
 in Serkland were taken;
 the young⁵²⁸ foe of the fire-red
 field of the snake⁵²⁹ was daring,
 before the host-harmer,⁵³⁰
 hazardous to Saracens,
 shielded, to wage harsh war-play⁵³¹
 went to flat Sicily.</p> | <p><i>Sexstefja</i> 2
 <i>Hkr</i> III 75
 <i>Mork</i> 64</p> |
|---|--|

So said Illugi Bryndœlaskáld:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>185. You strove, under splendid Michael—
 the son of Buðli, we know,
 bade his brothers-in-law visit⁵³²—
 in battle with the Southlands, Haraldr.</p> | <p><i>Poem on Haraldr</i>
 <i>harðráði</i> 4
 <i>Hkr</i> III 75–76</p> |
|---|--|

[231] Here it is said that Mikjáll was king at that time. Haraldr stayed in Africa for many years and acquired a great deal of gold and all kinds of valuable possessions and precious stones, but all the money that he gained and did not need for the provisioning of his army he sent with his trusted men north into Hólmgarðr into the

⁵²⁸ *ungr*: emendation of MSS *angr* (B), *ungir* (A).

⁵²⁹ *tandraud's ormtorgs hǫtuðr*: 'enemy of the fire-red market-place of the serpent', enemy of the dragon's home (gold), generous lord.

⁵³⁰ *herskrœðuðr*: 'diminisher of the army', warrior.

⁵³¹ *Hildar leikr*: 'game of Hildir (valkyrie)', battle.

⁵³² *sonr Buðla*: Atli (Attila the Hun). The poems *Atlakviða* and *Atlamál* relate Atli's treacherous invitation to his brothers-in-law Gunnarr and Hogni, whom he puts to death (*Poetic Edda* 240–63). Three other half-verses from Illugi's poem survive, two in *Snorra Edda* and one in *Flateyjarbók*. All include parenthetical allusions to legendary material, an example of *forn minni* 'tradition, inherited statement' of the kind Snorri observes to be customary in the verse form he calls *hjástælt* 'inlaid' (*Háttatal* v. 13, Snorri Sturluson 1991, 10).

possession and keeping of King Jarizleifr, and collected together there a great treasure, as was to be expected when he was raiding that part of the world where gold and silver were easiest to come by, and since he achieved so much, as was said before, that he captured eighty cities. He fought against the king himself in Africa and was victorious and took possession of a wide expanse of his realm, as the poet Þjóðólfr says:

186. Once the spear-lazy sluggard⁵³³
 stood far off, when the hastener
 of war-light⁵³⁴ ravished the rival
 of Rindr⁵³⁵ without bride-price;
 It was not possible for the prince
 or people of Africa⁵³⁶
 to withhold from him Ánar's
 hailstone-topped daughter.⁵³⁷
- Sexstefja* 3
Skáldsk I 36 (1st half)

Then Haraldr took the army to Sicily and there captured a city by this device: his fowlers caught with lime [232] the small birds that nested in the city and flew by day into the woods to find themselves food, and Haraldr had resinous fir-tree shavings bound on the birds' backs, and had wax and sulphur poured on them. Then the birds all flew at once into the city to their young. Then fire broke out from the birds; though each was carrying only a little load of fire, yet it set fire to the buildings, which were thatched with reeds, and then one house caught fire from another, and then all the town. Then the people, who had previously spoken haughtily and insultingly to Haraldr, came out humbly and asked for mercy anxiously and fearfully.

Another town he captured in this fashion: he had it said in the town that the leader of the Greek king's army was dead, and asked to bury his body in the city, and promised to lay out a great deal

⁵³³ *darrlatr dási*: 'spear-lazy sluggard', i.e. the king of Africa.

⁵³⁴ *dolgljóss skyndir*: 'hastener of the battle-light (sword)', warrior.

⁵³⁵ *Rindar elja*: 'rival of Rindr'. Rindr was a mistress of Óðinn, and bore him the son Váli; she is therefore the rival of the goddess Jörð, mother of Þórr by Óðinn. By *ofljóst*, Jörð represents the earth or land; here, Africa, which is represented as abducted (i.e. without bride-price, which legitimised a marriage) by Haraldr.

⁵³⁶ The reference to Africa in this verse is probably the source for the account of Haraldr's raids in Africa. *Morkinskinna* includes the account, but not this verse; it may have been included in the earlier version of *Morkinskinna*.

⁵³⁷ *Ánars mey*: 'daughter of Ánarr', Jörð, the land.

of money, as was customary for the souls of great men. This fortress was so strong that there was no hope of storming it with weapons. But when the townspeople heard tell of the death of Haraldr, and those who were in charge of churches were very eager to receive the money, though it was to be given to them by Vikings, each offered his own church for him to be taken to, thinking that they would then get the gold and silver and other precious things; they went to meet the body at the gateway of the city, carrying out crosses and holy relics, and dressed themselves in fine vestments. The Vikings carried the coffin high, and it was draped with costly cloth, and the men who accompanied the body were in silk clothes and deep hoods with helmets and coats of mail underneath, and when they got to the middle of the city gate, they dropped the coffin across the gateway. Then Haraldr's trumpeter sounded his trumpet, and all the army was ready armed; they thrust up the banners and ran to the town. But Haraldr himself had been among the coffin-bearers. Then Haraldr drew his sword, as did all twelve of his men who had escorted the coffin; they ran up into the gateway and killed there many men who were standing unarmed before them. There [233] Halldórr Snorrason was wounded, struck in the face. They were all wounded in some way, most of all from the stones which were thrown at them from the tower. Haraldr then won the town and took what he wanted of its wealth; then claimed possession of the town for the Greek king.

He brought many places in this land into the dominion of the Greek king before he returned to Miklagarðr. Soon afterwards he made his way with an army on from Miklagarðr to Jerusalem, and when he came to Jerusalem the land was all surrendered into his power. So says Stúfr, who had heard Haraldr tell of these events:⁵³⁸

187. Weapon-bold, the brave winner
went to subdue Jerusalem;

Stífsdrápa or *Stífa* 2
Hkr III 83

⁵³⁸ Stúfr blindi (the Blind) was an Icclander, son of Þórðr kotttr (the Cat) and grandson of Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir, heroine of *Laxdæla saga*. Two versions of a þáttur about the encounter between Stúfr and King Haraldr are preserved (*Laxdæla saga* 1934). The last line of this verse is part of the *drápa's klofastef* (split refrain) which is completed syntactically in verse 188. The verse as cited in *Heimskringla*, however, has in place of this line what must originally have been an element in a three-part refrain: *Hafi ríks þars vel líkar / víst of aldr með Kristi / Haralds end ofar löndum*, 'May great Haraldr's soul, above the earth, have a dwelling for ever with Christ, where there is joy'.

the ground was gained easily
 by the Greeks and the war-master.
 And with his ample power
 unburned the land submitted
 to the hand of the battle-hardener;
Haraldr's spirit above the earth . . .

Mork 78

This verse tells how that land came unburned and unravaged into Haraldr's power. Then he went out to Jordan and bathed there [234], as was the custom of pilgrims. He made offerings to the tomb of our lord and the holy cross and other holy relics in Jerusalem. He gave to them such a wealth of gold and silver that no one could reckon it in marks, and he made the road safe all the way out to Jordan and killed there robbers and other people who disturbed the peace, as Stúfr says:

188. The power reached, wrathful,
 of the ruler of Agðir⁵³⁹
 over both banks of Jordan;
 word of it thwarted criminals.
 And people were punished
 for proven crimes by the ruler,
 for deeds of evil, fairly.
dwelling with Christ for ever.

Stúfsdrápa 3

Hkr 84

Mork 78–79

After that he went back to Miklagarðr, and next Queen Zóe began to be displeased with Haraldr. The first reason was that he had kept the gold that belonged to the king of the Greeks, and not yielded it up according to the laws, and had taken into his own possession more than the king had granted him; they said that at the time when he was in command of the king's army no money had come from the *galley*s.⁵⁴⁰ The second reason was that Zóe accused Haraldr of making advances to her son's daughter Maria. Haraldr asked to marry her and was refused. People who have been in Miklagarðr say that the way the Væringjar remember the story is that Queen Zóe would have liked to have had Haraldr herself. Queen Zóe and

⁵³⁹ *Egða gramr*: prince of the people of Agðir, i.e. king of Norway.

⁵⁴⁰ Blöndal assesses the veracity of the story of Haraldr's imprisonment for misappropriation of funds and concludes that, if it happened at all, it must be located in the reign of Michael Calaphates, the emperor whose blinding is later recorded (Blöndal 1978, 78–96).

the emperor Monakus (Constantine IX Monomachos) had Haraldr seized, bound and taken [235] to a dungeon, with two other men, Úlfr who was later his *marshal*, and Halldórr Snorrason, and in the street near the dungeon the blessed King Óláfr appeared to him. Later a chapel to the blessed King Óláfr was built there, and that chapel still stands—and then they were thrown into the dungeon. The following night a widow came and opened the dungeon. It is a tower open at the top, and is now called Haraldr's Dungeon. The woman brought two servants with her; they lowered a rope from above and pulled up Haraldr and those who were with him. This woman had been cured by the blessed Óláfr, and he had appeared to her in a vision and told her to release his brother. Then Haraldr went at once to the Væringjaskipt. That is what they called the quarters where they lived. And when he got there he told them to get up and take up their weapons and then go to the king's palace, where he was sleeping, and they killed some of the Væringjar who were keeping guard over the king, and seized the king himself and put out both his eyes. So says Þórarinn in his *drápa*:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 189. Yet more glowing embers
of arms ⁵⁴¹ the king gathered.
by a great injury the emperor
of Greece was blinded. | <i>Hkr</i> III 86
<i>Mork</i> 83 |
|--|-------------------------------------|

Þjóðólfr also says this:⁵⁴²

- | | |
|---|--|
| 190. The soother of the wolf's sorrow ⁵⁴³ —
strife was then started—
ordered both the emperor's
eyes to be poked out. | <i>Sexstefja</i> 6
<i>Hkr</i> III 86
<i>Mork</i> 83–84 |
|---|--|

[236] Valgarðr says about the killing of the guards:

- | |
|---|
| 191. The company hanged quickly,
king's offspring, ⁵⁴⁴ you ordered;
after that, by your arranging,
are the Væringjar fewer. |
|---|

⁵⁴¹ *handa glóðir*: 'glowing coals (i.e. fire) of hands, arms', gold.

⁵⁴² This verse and the introductory clause are not in *Fsk* (B).

⁵⁴³ *heiðingja sítar eyðir*: 'destroyer of the wolf's sorrow, hunger', warrior.

⁵⁴⁴ *hilmis kundr*: 'king's descendant, kin', prince, king.

In many poems of Haraldr⁵⁴⁵ this great deed is mentioned, and it cannot be denied that it was the king of the Greeks himself that he blinded. Some count or duke could have been named, but in all the poems of Haraldr the same thing is said, that it was the emperor himself.⁵⁴⁶

That same night he seized the hall where Princess Maria was and took her with him, then they took two *galleys* and rowed in to Sæviðarsund. There were iron chains across the strait there.⁵⁴⁷ Then Haraldr said that the oars must be manned on both *galleys*, and all those who were not needed for rowing were to run aft on both *galleys* and everyone was to be holding his bedding;⁵⁴⁸ and so the ships were forced up onto the chains, but as soon as they were fast and the motion stopped, he ordered them to run forward. This then tipped the ship that Haraldr was on forward off the chains, but the other, which he was not on, was broken as it swung on the chains, and [237] many were lost from it there, while others were taken from the sea. By this means Haraldr escaped from Miklagarðr and so went into the Black Sea, and before he sailed into it he put the Princess Maria ashore and provided her with a good escort to return to Miklagarðr, and he told her to tell Queen Zœe that it seemed to Haraldr that she now had little power over him, and to ask her whether her power would be at all able to prevent him taking Princess Maria if he wanted to. Then he sailed north into the Ellipaltar and went from there back through Austríki. On these journeys Haraldr composed *humorous verses*; there are sixteen of them, all ending with the same refrain. This is one:

⁵⁴⁵ *i mǫrgum kvæðum Haralds*: the use of adjectival genitive with *kvæði* could be translated 'in many poems by Haraldr'. However, at this point both *Morkinskinna* (84) and *Heimskringla* (III 87) cite poems by named poets, beginning the following sentence *i þessum tveim drápum Haralds* 'in these two *drápur* of Haraldr', confirming that the sense in *Fagrskinna* must also be 'poems about Haraldr'; cf *i kvæðum hans* (*Egils saga* 1933, 94).

⁵⁴⁶ Blöndal (1978, 93–94) argues from Byzantine sources that the emperor Michael V was blinded in the course of a political uprising in 1042, and that the Varangians were given the task of carrying out the blinding.

⁵⁴⁷ 'There was a great iron chain across the Golden Horn, and, at least from the time of Manuel I Comnenus, across the Bosphorus, as a defence for the harbour. These chains rested on rafts placed at appropriate distances, which were drawn into the shore in the daytime, and refloated across the waterways at night' (Blöndal 1978, 98).

⁵⁴⁸ *Morkinskinna* adds *eða annan hofga* 'or something else heavy', making it clear that the bundles of bedding were to act as added weights.

192. There sliced past broad Sicily *Hkr* III 89
 swift—then we were glorious—
 clinkered planks;⁵⁴⁹ well the poop's stag,⁵⁵⁰ *Mork* 85
 as expected, under men glided. *Skáldsk* I 75
 I would not think a weakling
 would go there again. (1st half)
*Yet the Gerðr of the gold ring*⁵⁵¹
of Garðar leaves me dangling.

In this he was alluding to Ellisif, daughter of King Jarizleifr. Haraldr went to Hólmgarðr to see King Jarizleifr and was well received there, and took charge of the great wealth he had previously sent back from Miklagarðr for himself. Before Haraldr went west away from Garðar Jarizleifr married his daughter to him; [238] her name was Elisabeth, but the Norwegians called her Ellisif. Stúfr inn blindi says this:

193. The lord of many battles⁵⁵² made *Stúfsdrápa* 4
 the marriage he wished for; *Hkr* III 90
 the people's friend⁵⁵³ got plenty *Mork* 87
 of precious goods, and a king's daughter.

In spring he set out from the east, leaving Hólmgarðr, and went with three ships to Sweden. So says Valgarðr:⁵⁵⁴

194. You launched a ship with a lovely *Poem on Haraldr harðráði* 5
 load; won yourself glory; *Hkr* III 91
 you brought gold, guiltless,⁵⁵⁵ *Mork* 87–88
 from Garðar in the east, Haraldr.
 In the fierce storm, stoutly
 you steered, valiant ruler;
 you saw, when eased the sea-spray,
 Sigtún; the ship pitching.

⁵⁴⁹ *súð*: the joins between overlapping planks on a ship, i.e. the ship.

⁵⁵⁰ *vengis hjörtr*: 'the hart of the poop or raised deck', the ship.

⁵⁵¹ *gollhrings Gerðr*: 'Gerðr (goddess) of the gold ring', woman.

⁵⁵² *ógnar mildr aðlingr*: 'the king, nobleman generous with battle'.

⁵⁵³ *gunna spjalli*: 'the confidant of men', king. This is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* and *Mork* have *Gauta spjalli*, 'confidant of Gautar', interpreted in *LP* as a kenning for Óðinn.

⁵⁵⁴ This verse and the introductory phrase do not occur in *Fsk* (B).

⁵⁵⁵ *grunlaust*: 'without suspicion'.

And then Sveinn Úlfsson and Haraldr met. They were related by marriage, because Ellisif, who was married to Haraldr, was the daughter of Ingigerðr, daughter of Óláfr svenski. Óláfr's sister was Ástríðr, [239] Sveinn Úlfsson's mother. A little earlier Sveinn had fled before King Magnús from Denmark. Then Sveinn asked Haraldr to enter an alliance with him in respect of the trouble between himself and King Magnús, and pointed out to him that King Magnús had usurped the realms of both of them.

Haraldr answered in this manner, that he did not want to withhold his friendship from Sveinn, 'but I want to meet my kinsman King Magnús before I become his enemy or make friends with his enemies.'

Then Haraldr went to Denmark, as it says here.⁵⁵⁶

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>195. In the sea from Sweden,
 strife-glad king,⁵⁵⁷ the oak ship⁵⁵⁸
 later sped under you; there lay your
 lawful heritage awaiting you.
 The ship had sail hoisted
 high as you went driving
 by low-lying Skáni; ladies
 related to Danes you frightened.</p> | <p><i>Poem on Haraldr harðráði</i> 6
 <i>Hkr</i> III 92
 <i>Mork</i> 88</p> |
|---|---|

CHAPTER 52

Then there took place the events that were referred to before, where King Magnús and his uncle Haraldr met; they spoke together, and Haraldr asked how King Magnús intended to divide the power between them. But King Magnús said that he intended [240] to act on the advice of his men of rank, warriors and landholders. Then men of authority and the king's advisers were summoned, and King Magnús had it made known to them what Haraldr was demanding.

Then Einarr þambarskelfir answered and said that Haraldr had been a long way away when they had won the country from the sons of Knútr, 'and we are not keen to be divided between two kings. We have always served one king, and so it must remain for as long as King Magnús continues to reign.'

⁵⁵⁶ The verse is unattributed in *Morkinskinna* as in *Fagrskinna*, but in *Heimskringla* it is attributed to Valgarðr.

⁵⁵⁷ *ógnbliðr yngvi*: 'battle-glad king'.

⁵⁵⁸ *eik*: (ship made of) oak.

To this all the men of authority agreed; though each directed his speech in his own way, they all came to the same conclusion, that they wanted to have King Magnús as sole king over them. With that Haraldr went away, and thought he had not been treated honourably by his kinsman; then he turned back to Sweden and arranged a meeting with Sveinn; they entered an agreement whereby Haraldr would take on Norway and Sveinn Denmark, and they would take both those lands from King Magnús by force. They raised troops and went widely around Sjólfund and Fjón; they burned and raided and captured many people, as Valgarðr says:

196. Haraldr, you had harried *Poem on Haraldr harðráði* 7
 the whole—you laid low enemies— *Hkr* III 93
 the wolf, keen for carrion, *Mork* 89–90
 came running—of Selund.
 The king marched with many
 men on Fjón, inflicted on
 helmets no small hardship;
 the highly carved shield split.

- [241] 197. A bright blaze in the township *Poem on Haraldr harðráði* 8
 burned south of Roskilde. *Hkr* III 93–94
 Smoking houses the resolute *Mork* 90
 ruler had brought down.
 People lay in plenty,
 deprived by death of freedom;
 families slipped, grief-stricken,
 silent in flight to the forest.

198. We hindered the unhappy *Poem on Haraldr harðráði* 9
 host, scattered; still living *Hkr* III 94
 Danes fled away, but women *Mork* 90
 were captured, fair ones.
 A lock held ladies' bodies,
 many lasses before you
 passed to the ships; fair flesh
 fetters cut greedily.

When Haraldr and Sveinn had achieved what is referred to here, they parted company; Haraldr sailed by the outer route⁵⁵⁹ to Norway, as Valgarðr says:

⁵⁵⁹ *útleiðis*: 'the outside way', out to sea in contrast to the route between the coast and the islands.

- [242] 199. It was much like the middle *Poem on Haraldr harðráði* 10
of the mouth of a dragon, blazing *Mork* 92
with fire, to see you steering
from the south your vessels;
the warship wore its red muzzle,
with pure gold shining;
all day sailed the *dragon-ship*,
dashed by the wave its bottom.
200. You rule all Norway; never *Poem on Haraldr harðráði* 11
a nobler king will cut through *Mork* 92
the cold sea; the courageous
company supports its leader.

This poem tells how Haraldr came to Norway from the time when he left the country for Miklagarðr. When he came into the Vík he left his ships and went to his hereditary estates in Upplönd where his father had ruled, and demanded that the *bændr* give him the title of king according to his birthright. Because of the power of King Magnús no man dared to let anyone else in the country be called king while he was alive. Then Haraldr went north into Guðbrandsdalar, held a meeting there, and there demanded to be called king. There was among the *bændr* one man who did so: Þórir of Steig, who later became [243] a great leader. He was fifteen years old when he was the first in Norway to give Haraldr the title of king. King Haraldr at once gave him in return a maple-wood bowl, with a silver band around it and a gilt handle over it, and the bowl was full of refined silver. He also gave him two gold rings; the two of them together weighed a mark, and along with that his own cloak, which was made partly of dark costly cloth; he also promised him great honour when he came to power. Then King Haraldr went with a troop through Upplönd; he was then given the title of king by the *bændr*. Sveinn then also went with warships around Smálönd in the Danish realm.

The news of all the events that have just been related was learned by King Magnús, and with the advice of all the chieftains he directed the army to Norway and intended to defend that land first. He came into the Vík and learned that King Haraldr was coming down to meet him with his troop. Then friends and kinsmen of both came forward and carried offers of reconciliation between them. So it was arranged that the kinsmen Magnús and Haraldr were to meet in a truce, and then a magnificent feast was announced and prepared at

the place called Akr. King Magnús was to entertain Haraldr for three days, with sixty of his men.

The first day when the king was giving the feast, after the tables had been taken away, King Magnús went out of the room, and when he came back in men were walking both before and after him, heavily laden. King Haraldr's men occupied one dais. Then King Magnús went to the first man and gave him a fine sword, the second a shield, the third a tunic, the next a garment, or gold, or a weapon, finer gifts to those who were of higher rank. Then he came to his kinsman Haraldr, and had in his hand two fine reeds, and said:

'Kinsman, which reed do you want to accept from me as your gift?'

Then Haraldr answered, 'The one closer to me.' [244]

Then King Magnús said, 'With this reed I give you half of the kingdom of Norway, with all taxes and dues and all possessions, and on these terms, that you shall be king with authority in all places equal to mine. But when we are both together, I shall have precedence in salutations and all service and seating, and if there are three men of high rank I shall sit in the middle. I am to have the king's berth in the harbours and the king's quay. You are also to strengthen and support my power, since I have made you such a great man in Norway as I thought would never exist while my skull was above ground.'

Then Haraldr stood up and thanked his kinsman heartily for this honour and his fine gift, and then they were all merry. When three days had passed, King Haraldr had a feast prepared with all his troop, invited King Magnús to it with sixty men and entertained them very lavishly. On the first day of his feast he chose gifts for all King Magnús's men, and many exotic treasures were brought in then, and later given away. When all had been given a gift except King Magnús, Haraldr had two chairs brought. He sat on one and invited King Magnús to sit on the other. Then many large bags were brought into the room and cloths were spread on the straw, and then King Haraldr had the treasures opened and said to King Magnús:

'The other day you granted me great power which you had won honourably from your enemies and mine, and took me into partnership with you. In that I was well and fittingly treated. Now the other side is to be looked to. I have been in foreign parts and sometimes

in mortal danger before I had gathered this gold, but now I will divide it in two. You, kinsman, are to have half of the gold, since you wish me to have a half share of the land with you.'

Then King Haraldr had all the gold displayed, and then divided between them. Everyone who saw it thought it a great [245] marvel that so much gold should have come into the Northern lands. But in fact it was the wealth of the king of the Greeks, for as everyone says, houses are full of red gold there—and now the kings were in very good spirits.

Now there came to light a lump of gold as big as a man's head. King Haraldr took it up and said:

'Kinsman, where is the gold to be exchanged for this knob?'

Then the king replied, 'Unrest and heavy levies have brought it about that almost all the gold and silver has been given to the retainers, and now there is no more gold in my possession than this ring,' and he took it from his arm and gave it to Haraldr.

He looked at the ring and said, 'This is not much gold, kinsman, for a king who owns two kingdoms, and some will even doubt whether you own this ring.'

Then King Magnús answered gravely, 'If I have no right to this ring, then I don't know what I do own by right, for the blessed King Óláfr gave me the ring at our last parting.'

Then King Haraldr answered, laughing, 'What you say is true, king; your father gave you this ring, having taken it earlier from my father for no good reason. It did not go well with lesser kings in this land when your father was at his most powerful.'

Now they ended the feast with twelve of the most powerful men from the troop of each swearing oaths of peace between the kings, and afterwards they parted in friendship. Both held power over the winter in Norway, and each maintained his own court.

This is the way it is told by Þorgils Snorrason, a wise man, and he said he was told by Guðríðr, daughter of Guðþormr, who was the son of Steigar-Þórir, and he said that he had seen the maple-wood bowl and the mantle which Haraldr gave Þórir, which had been cut up for an altar cloth by then.⁵⁶⁰ That is confirmed by Bølverkr, brother of the poet Þjóðólfr:

⁵⁶⁰ According to *Heimskringla* it was Guðríðr who claimed to have seen the bowl: 'Þorgils Snorrason said that he saw the altar cloth that was made out of the cloak, and Guðríðr, daughter of Guthormr Steigar-Þórisson, said that her father Guthormr

[246] 201. As I heard, into your hands,
 hoard-punisher,⁵⁶¹ came later
 the green land; you gave him
 gold when you met Magnus.
 Between you two kinsmen
 truce was maintained in perfect
 peace; then Sveinn expected
 a period of strife⁵⁶² only.

Drápa on Haraldr harðráði 7
Hkr III 101–02
Mork 97

CHAPTER 53

When Haraldr Sigurðarson took up the rule of Norway with his kinsman King Magnús, a *hundred* and twenty two years⁵⁶³ had passed since the death of Haraldr inn hárfagri. In all this time Norway had been ruled by leaders who were all descended from King Haraldr, except when Danish or Swedish kings were ruling, although these leaders who were descended from King Haraldr were from various branches of the family. But since King Haraldr Sigurðarson became king, the kingship of Norway has been held exclusively by his descendants, though there has been some division of the family into branches in their descent from him.

That autumn it happened that King Magnús and King Haraldr went with their court west from the Vík, and they both moored in one harbour. The following day Haraldr was ready to sail but [247] King Magnús was not. Then Haraldr sailed ahead north during the day, and when they came to harbour he moored his ship in the king's berth. King Magnús sailed later in the day, and came to the harbour when Haraldr had put up awnings and lay in the king's berth.

Then King Magnús said, when the sail was lowered, 'Take to the oars all along the sides, and those who are not rowing take up arms! Since they will not move we will have to fight.'

They did as he said. When King Haraldr saw that his kinsman

owned the bowl, so that she saw it' (*Hkr* III 101). Þorgils Snorrason, a priest who lived at Skarð in Iceland, died in 1201.

⁵⁶¹ *hoddstríðir*: 'hoard-, treasure-tormentor', distributor of treasure, generous lord.

⁵⁶² *rómalda*: 'time of battle'.

⁵⁶³ *hundrað vetra tólfrætt ok tveir vetr*: In this instance the 'long hundred' (120) is specified. This dates the death of King Haraldr hárfagri to 924. See Introduction, pp. 5–6.

King Magnús was rowing at them fully armed and ready to fight, Haraldr said that the cables should be cut, 'and let us cast off the ship; my kinsman King Magnús is angry now.'

So it was done; the ship was allowed to drift in, and King Magnús laid his ship in the berth. And when both had made fast, King Haraldr went aboard King Magnús's ship with a few men. King Magnús bade him welcome.

Then Haraldr answered, 'We thought that we had come among friends now, but we rather doubted a while ago whether you wanted that. It is true, as the saying is, that youth is impetuous. We will not regard this as other than a childish trick.'

Then said King Magnús, 'It was a family trait, not a childish trick. I can remember what I gave you and what I denied you. If this small thing were taken without my consent, there would soon be another. I wish to keep to all the terms that were agreed, and I expect to have the same from you as we have stipulated.'

Then answered King Haraldr, 'It is an ancient custom that he who is wiser gives way,' and he then went back on board his ship.

In such exchanges between the kings it was seen that it was difficult to maintain their settlement. King Magnús's men said that he was in the right, but those who were not very wise reckoned that Haraldr had rather lost face, and Haraldr's men said that there was no stipulation other than that King Magnús should have the berth [248] if they both arrived at the same time, but that Haraldr was not obliged to move away from the berth if he got there earlier. They considered Haraldr to have acted both wisely and well. But those who wanted to present it in a worse light said that King Magnús wanted to break the agreement, and that he was trying to do dishonour and wrong to King Haraldr. Such disagreements arose in the discussion of unwise men, and there were further matters which gave rise to some dissent. They ruled the country both together through the winter.

CHAPTER 54

But in the spring the kings called out a *levy* and set out south for Denmark. That was one year after the death of Rognvaldr Brúsason.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶⁴ Rognvaldr died in 1046.

They went with the army south to Denmark to oppose Sveinn Úlfsson, who had spent that winter in Denmark. Then Sveinn fled from the country and up into Sweden, and when the kings were lying with their force south off Jótland King Magnús was suddenly taken ill, and when he came to the point of death he gave all his rule into the hands of his kinsman Haraldr. And then King Magnús died, and after this great event King Haraldr held a meeting with his troop and told them his intention: he meant to go with his army to the Vébjargabing and there take the title of king over Denmark and then to conquer the country; he said it was his inheritance, as was the realm of the king of Norway, from his kinsman King Magnús. Then he asked the army to support him, and said that the Norwegians would be overlords of the Danes for ever after.

Then Einarr þambarskelfir spoke, and said that he had a greater duty to take the body of his foster-son King Magnús for burial and carry him to his father, the blessed King Óláfr, than to fight abroad and covet the possessions of other men. He finished his speech by saying that he would rather serve King Magnús dead than any other king alive. Then they took [249] the body of King Magnús and laid it out properly, and put the bier on the *after-deck* of the king's ship. Then all those who were from north of Staðr made ready to escort the body of King Magnús back to Norway. Once the *levy* was broken up, King Haraldr thought his best course for the moment was to go back to Norway and first take control of the Norwegian kingdom, and build up his resources of troops and power from there, and this he did.

Then all the kingdom of Norway submitted with oaths to King Haraldr, first at the Borgarþing, and then he went north to other assemblies; all the people in Norway swore allegiance to him.

Einarr þambarskelfir and the army of Þrœndir went north with King Magnús's body to Nidaróss and buried him at Christ's Church outside the choir. Over his grave wept many a noble man. So says Oddr Kíkinaskáld:⁵⁶⁵

- | | |
|---|---|
| 202. Men bore the generous monarch
with many tears to the grave;
that was a weighty burden
to the ones he had given gold to. | <i>Poem on Magnús inn góði</i> 2
<i>Hkr</i> III 106
<i>Mork</i> 147 |
|---|---|

⁵⁶⁵ The verse and the introductory phrase do not occur in *Fsk* (B).

The king's retainers, hearts heavy,
hardly could keep from weeping;
the lord's people afterwards
often sat in sorrow.

Everyone agrees that there has been no king in Norway as popular as Magnús inn góði, and so this news brought sorrow to many a man. [250]

When Haraldr came north into Þrándheimr he called a meeting of eight *shires* at Eyrar; there he was put in possession of the whole country, and after that he was the sole king in Norway for the rest of his life.

CHAPTER 55

When King Sveinn heard of the death of King Magnús he had just gone to his horse. That was in Skáni on the Á en helga; he was about to mount and intended to ride up into Gautland and abandon the realm of Denmark. Then a man came to him and told him of the death of King Magnús.

King Sveinn replied, 'This is important news, if it is true, and let God witness what all the Danes shall learn, that now I will either gain power in Denmark or die here on my hereditary land'; he mounted his horse, and at once turned back into Denmark. Then troops flocked to support him; he brought Denmark under his control, and in autumn went to Jótland in the south, then summoned the Vébjargapíng and demanded the title of king from the Danes, and he was then adopted as king by all the Danes, and people consider him to have been king in Denmark from that time, but not before. Þorkell geysa gave him the title of king for the second time. Then the Danes spoke insultingly about the Norwegians' king. There was so much mockery made of him that Þorkell geysa's daughters carved an anchor out of cheese, and said it would be strong enough for the ships the Norwegian king would conquer Denmark with. The following summer King Haraldr brought out a half *levy* of troops and provisions from Norway, went south to Jótland, raided there during the summer and burned extensively, and moored his ships in Goðnarfjörðr. Then he and Þjóðólfr composed this verse:⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁶ The reading here, in which the verse is attributed to both Haraldr and Þjóðólfr,

203. We get anchors to grip in *Hkr* III 109
 Goðnafjörðr, while the *Mork* 156
 song-Gerðr,⁵⁶⁷ lady in linen,⁵⁶⁸
 is lulling her husband.
 further south next summer,
 I foresee, the cold nose⁵⁶⁹ must
 with its fluke fasten the vessel;
 in the flood we'll sink the anchor.

This expedition is also mentioned by *Bolverkr*:⁵⁷⁰

204. From the fair land you fitted out *Drápa on Haraldr harðráði* 8
 a fleet; round ships water *Hkr* III 109–10
 flowed; with splendid surge-steeds⁵⁷¹ *Mork* 156
 the sea last year⁵⁷² you furrowed. *Skáldsk* I 94 (1st half)
 On the dark wave, decking⁵⁷³—
 Danes were then in trouble—
 lay, precious; people looked on
 laden ships off the shore.

Then King Haraldr burned Þorkell geysa's farm, and his daughters were led in bonds to the ships. Then this was composed:

- [252] 205. Danish girls engraved us *Hkr* III 110–11
 gear of the isle-encircler⁵⁷⁴ *Mork* 157
 out of cheese, and anchor-rings;
 that angered the ruler.
 Now in the morning many
 maids see—few are laughing—
 a strong hook of iron
 holding the king's vessels.

People say that a lookout who had seen King Haraldr's ships said to Þorkell geysa's daughters:

is that of *Fsk* (A). *Fsk* (B) attributes it only to Þjóðólfr, *Mork* only to Haraldr. In *Hkr* Haraldr recites the first four lines and then calls on Þjóðólfr to complete the verse.

⁵⁶⁷ *galdrs Gerðr*: 'Gerðr (goddess) of chant, song', woman.

⁵⁶⁸ *línæk*: 'linen-oak', woman.

⁵⁶⁹ *kaldnefr*: 'cold nose', the fluke of the anchor (by metonymy, the anchor itself).

⁵⁷⁰ The verse and introductory sentence do not occur in *Fsk* (B).

⁵⁷¹ *gjálfrostóð*: 'surge-steed', ship.

⁵⁷² *ár it næsta*: 'last year' or 'the next year'.

⁵⁷³ *skokkr*: a plank of the deck, here used by metonymy of the ship.

⁵⁷⁴ *eybaugs þing*: 'gear of the island-ring (sea, which encircles islands)', sea-going equipment.

‘You daughters of Geysa said that King Haraldr of Norway would never come to Denmark, but what do you think is happening now?’

One of them answered, ‘That’s how it was yesterday.’

Porkell geysa paid a large amount of money for his daughters’ release. So said the poet Grani.⁵⁷⁵

- | | |
|---|--|
| 206. Out there in heavy Hornskógr
the Hlökk of Kraki’s snowdrift, ⁵⁷⁶
unbending, allowed never
her brows to grow dry.
The lord of Fjilir ⁵⁷⁷ sent fleeing
foes of the king shorewards;
Fast was Dóttar’s father
forced to pay out money. | <i>Poem on Haraldr harðráði</i> 1
<i>Hkr</i> III 111
<i>Mork</i> 158 |
|---|--|

[235] Dóttar was the name of a daughter of Porkell geysa.

King Haraldr raided all summer in Denmark and seized an immense amount of money, but he did not establish himself in Denmark at that time; he went back to Norway in the autumn and stayed there for the winter. The following summer he went raiding again in Denmark and did so year after year, doing a lot of damage widely throughout the kingdom. So says Stúfr:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 207. Falstr was laid waste, as we
were told; people felt terror.
The raven was fed, ⁵⁷⁸ but farmers
were frightened every year. | <i>Stúfsdrápa</i> 5
<i>Hkr</i> III 112
<i>Mork</i> 160 |
|---|--|

Then King Sveinn was established in Denmark; he waited quietly during the winter and lay offshore in the summers with the *levy* and threatened to go north to Norway with a Danish army and do no

⁵⁷⁵ This verse, the introductory sentence and explanatory comment on *Dóttar* do not occur in *Fsk* (B). The verse as cited in *Mork* has *dóttur* (oblique case of *dóttir* ‘daughter’) instead of *Dóttu*.

⁵⁷⁶ *Kraka drífu Hlökk*: ‘Hlökk (valkyrie) of Kraki’s (seed, scattered like a) snowdrift (gold)’, woman. The legendary King of the Danes, Hrólfr kraki, strewed gold on his path when fleeing from the Swedes, so that they were delayed as they picked it up.

⁵⁷⁷ *Fjilir dróttinn*: ‘lord of the people of Fjilir’, king of Norway.

⁵⁷⁸ *geddr* ‘fed, enriched’, the reading of *Hkr* and *Mork*, is adopted here for the sake of an alliterating translation, but *gladdr* ‘cheered’, the reading of *Fsk*, is also valid.

less damage there than Haraldr was doing in Denmark. King Sveinn challenged King Haraldr during the winter to come south with his troop, and Sveinn would come north, to meet by the Elfr and fight it out there to the end, and so divide the kingdoms between them. Then both spent all the winter preparing their ships to bring out a full *levy* in the spring.

That summer there came in from Iceland Þorleikr⁵⁷⁹ fagri (the Fair), and he began to compose a *flokkr* about King Sveinn, and learned, when he arrived in Norway, that King Haraldr had gone south to the Elfr to meet King Sveinn. Then he composed this:

- [254] 208. I expect the war-keen prince *Flokkr on Sveinn Úlfsson 2*
on the path of Rakni,⁵⁸⁰ *Hkr III 113*
open-handed, to meet Innþrændir⁵⁸¹ *Mork 161*
in the onslaught of spear-points.⁵⁸²
Of the two God can determine
which takes life or lands
from the other; for dishonoured
agreements Sveinn cares little.
209. Haraldr, who often raises *Flokkr on Sveinn Úlfsson 3*
a red shield off lands, *Hkr III 113*
angrily brings broad plank-beasts⁵⁸³ *Mork 161–62*
on Buðli's tracks⁵⁸⁴ southwards,
while, bright-painted, gold mouths gaping,
the gorgeous leek-animals⁵⁸⁵
of Sveinn, who reddens spears,
set out over sea northwards.
- [255] 210. Rich in booty, the Danes' ruler *Flokkr on Sveinn Úlfsson 4*
will rob most chieftains of life—
fierce, he assembles fully-
fortified ships off-shore—
if he sails from the south with
six *hundred* (720) reindeer of the path

⁵⁷⁹ *Þorleikr*: emended from MSS *Þorleifr*. The form *Þorleikr* is used in the other texts and elsewhere in *Fsk* (B).

⁵⁸⁰ *Rakna stigr*: 'path of Rakni (a sea-king)', the sea.

⁵⁸¹ *Innþrændi lið*: 'the company of men of Inner Trøndelag'.

⁵⁸² *odda snerra*: 'sharp battle of spear-points', battle.

⁵⁸³ *borðraukr*: 'plank-draught-beast', ship.

⁵⁸⁴ *Buðla slóðir*: 'tracks of Buðli (sea-king)', sea.

⁵⁸⁵ *lauks glæsivýr*: 'splendid animal of the leek (mast)', ship.

of the masthead, by rollers made tame,⁵⁸⁶
to meet the harsh lord of Hǫrðar.⁵⁸⁷

211. Úlfr's favoured offspring⁵⁸⁸ *Flokkur on Sveinn Úlfsson* 5
to Elfr steers fine vessels,
he who piles carrion-heaps
highest in Gunnr's tempest,⁵⁸⁹
where the red weapon-froth⁵⁹⁰
wets the field, gilded⁵⁹¹ banners
hover; through the shirt of Hǫlfr⁵⁹²
hits home Gautr's downpour.

Then King Haraldr came to the appointed meeting-place of the kings with his army, and learned then that King Sveinn was lying in the south off Jótland. Then King Haraldr said to Þjóðólfr:

- [256] 212. Baldr has lied to Baldr, *Mork* 162

Then Þjóðólfr replied,

byrnie-meeting god⁵⁹³ to god of
the sword-strap stick,⁵⁹⁴ the dispenser
of snake's ground⁵⁹⁵ who rules a land further south.
This more northerly Njǫrðr
of the noisy storm of shields⁵⁹⁶
is foremost, to his word more faithful
far; you are bold, northern king!

⁵⁸⁶ *hlunntamiðr húnferils hreinn*: 'reindeer of the track of the masthead, accustomed to rollers', ship.

⁵⁸⁷ *Hǫrða gramr*: 'lord of the Hordalanders', king of Norway.

⁵⁸⁸ *Úlfs óskmogr*: 'beloved son of Úlfr', Sveinn.

⁵⁸⁹ *Gunnar veðr*: 'storm of Gunnr (valkyrie)', battle.

⁵⁹⁰ *vápnlauðr*: 'weapon-froth', blood.

⁵⁹¹ *gollmerkð*: 'gold-decorated', emendation of *gullmarkuð*.

⁵⁹² *Hǫlfs serkr*: 'the shirt of Hǫlfr (legendary king of Hordaland, hero of *Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka*)', mailcoat. *Hǫlfs* is an emendation of MS *Hǫlfs* (a later form of the same name) to provide the two syllables necessary for the metre.

⁵⁹³ *brynþings Baldr*: 'Baldr (god) of the mailcoat-meeting (battle)', warrior; here, Sveinn.

⁵⁹⁴ *feilstinga Baldr*: 'Baldr (god) of the pin of the sword-strap (sword)', warrior; here, Haraldr.

⁵⁹⁵ *lims láðbrjótr*: 'breaker of the serpent's land (gold)', generous lord, here, Sveinn.

⁵⁹⁶ *glymhriðar borða Njǫrðr*: 'Njǫrðr (god) of the noise-storm of shields (battle)', warrior; Haraldr.

Then Haraldr divided his forces and sent back the ordinary men of the army of the *bændr*, and went on with his retainers and the *landed men*, taking that part of the force of the *bændr* which came from closest to the eastern part of the country, and proceeded south to Denmark, south of Vendilskagi and so southwards through Þjóð, and then went with a shield of war,⁵⁹⁷ burning farms and killing people. So says Stúfr:⁵⁹⁸

213. Folk in Þjóð went fleeing *Stúfsdrápa* 6
 fast from the king's coming. *Hkr* 114
 The gallant heart held sway; *Mork* 163
Haraldr's spirit above the earth . . .

[257] And he went all the way south to Heiðabœr, captured the town, and sacked and burned it all. Then his men composed this:

214. All Heiðabœr in anger *Hkr* III 114–15
 from end to end was ravaged *Mork* 164
 with fire; that can be called a
 courageous deed, I consider.
 It is likely we will do damage—
 before dawn last night I was
 on the stronghold wall—to Sveinn;
 spewed high flame from houses.

This is also mentioned by Þorleikr fagri when he heard that King Sveinn had not come to meet King Haraldr, and that the battle by the Elfr had not taken place:

215. Any ignorant war-Rognir⁵⁹⁹ *Flokkur on Sveinn Úlfsson* 6
 can ask the leader's following *Hkr* III 115
 how⁶⁰⁰ the king keen in hostility *Mork* 164
 to Heiðabœr advanced,
 [258] when to the king's town westward
 once, Haraldr sent, in the year
 that never should have been,
 needless, skis of fair weather.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁷ *för með herskildi*: ravaged.

⁵⁹⁸ This verse and the introductory phrase are not in *Fsk* (B).

⁵⁹⁹ *folk-Rognir*: 'battle-Rognir (Óðinn)', warrior, man.

⁶⁰⁰ *hvé*: this is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* (B) has *hverssó*; the word is missing in *Fsk* (A).

⁶⁰¹ *byrskíð*: 'fair-wind-ski', ship.

Then King Haraldr went back north, and had sixty ships, which were large and also heavily laden with booty which they had taken over the summer. And when they sailed north off Þjóð, King Sveinn came down from the land against them with a great army and challenged King Haraldr to fight against him on land, but King Haraldr had a force half the size of Sveinn's and yet he challenged King Sveinn to fight against him on ships. So says Þorleikr:⁶⁰²

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>216. Sveinn bade—he was born at
 the best time in the world—
 the powerful ranks redden
 round shields on land;
 but Haraldr said, unhesitating,
 he would, if the land was
 defended by the rash king, fight on
 the fair-weather Valr⁶⁰³ rather.</p> | <p><i>Flokkr on Sveinn Úlfsson 7</i>
 <i>Hkr III 116</i>
 <i>Mork 165–66</i></p> |
|--|--|

After that King Haraldr sailed north and turned again east to Limfjörðr because the weather drove him that way, and [259] they went on raiding wherever they were. They began to row from the south and put in by Sámsey⁶⁰⁴ overnight. And at sunrise a heavy fog lay all over the island. Then they saw that in one direction over the sea beside them it looked as if there were some kind of fires. Then the king was told about this.

Then King Haraldr said, 'Take the awnings off the ships and let us head north under oars. The fog has come to us here along the land, but out at sea the sun must be shining brightly, and these fires are caused by nothing other than the morning sun shining on the fittings of ships, prows and gilded weather-vanes.'

It was just as he said. King Sveinn had come there with an overwhelming army, and strongly urged his troop to row in pursuit as soon as they saw the troop of Norwegians. Then the Danes began to row after them. They had much faster ships, less heavily laden.

Then King Haraldr saw that the Danes were chasing them and that something must be done. In the rear went his ship, the *dragon-*

⁶⁰² *Morkinskinna* attributes the verse to Þjóðólfr.

⁶⁰³ *byrjar Valr*: 'Valr (a horse) of fair wind', ship.

⁶⁰⁴ This place name occurs also in *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 166), but *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 116) has *Hlésey*, which is more probable in relation to Limafjörðr.

ship, which he commanded himself. Then Haraldr said that beams must be thrown overboard and on them were to be put valuable robes and other kinds of expensive treasures. The sea was calm and fair then, and these goods drifted on the current.

When the Danes saw their possessions drifting on the sea those in front turned towards them, thinking it easier to pick up what was floating freely than to claim it from the Norwegians on board, and so the pursuit was delayed.

When King Sveinn came up with his ship he urged the troop on, and said that it would be shameful, with so great a force as the Danes had, to let the Norwegians go in peace when they had fewer men. Then the Danes began to row again.

Then King Haraldr saw that the Danish ships were moving faster, and told them to lighten their own ships more. Then they threw overboard malt and wheat, and that held them back instead for a while. Then King Haraldr had the battle-defences and empty barrels thrown overboard, and had [260] the prisoners captured in battle thrown out with them. Then those people clung to the wood and climbed up onto it. Then it all drifted together on the current. The Danes rowed up and rescued the people, and Haraldr escaped north out to sea while they were turning their ships to pick up the people who were in the sea. Then the Danes turned back, and Haraldr to Norway. About this Þorleikr composed:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>217. I have heard it all, how
 on the ships' path⁶⁰⁵ Norwegians
 were pursued by Sveinn; spirited,
 the second king escaped.
 The Þrændir's prince's⁶⁰⁶ plunder—
 perished more of their vessels—
 was all set on the rain-swollen
 sea of Jótland, floating.</p> | <p><i>Flokkur on Sveinn Úlfsson</i> 8
 <i>Hkr</i> III 117
 <i>Mork</i> 168</p> |
|--|--|

King Sveinn sailed his ships south by Sámsey and there met seven ships manned by men of the Vík. They were levied men and *bændr*. When the king came to them, they asked for quarter and offered money on their own behalf. So said Þorleikr:

⁶⁰⁵ *flausta vegr*: 'road of ships', sea.

⁶⁰⁶ *Þrændi þengill*: 'king of the Þrændir (people of Trøndelag)', i.e. king of Norway.

218. To men's lord a large settlement *Flokkur on Sveinn Úlfsson* 9
 the leader's friends offered; *Hkr* III 118
 stout of heart, their force smaller, *Mork* 169
 they stilled the combat.
 [261] And, lightning-witted, later—
 life was dear to the children
 of men—the farmers deferred
 the fight, when they took to speeches.

CHAPTER 56

King Haraldr was a powerful man, a strong ruler in his country, and it is said by all that there has been no wiser king in the northern lands. He was a strong man and skilled in arms; the success of his deeds was such as has long been related, and yet much the greater part of his exploits remains untold. This is because of our lack of knowledge and because we are unwilling to record matters not attested, though we may have heard of them, and it seems better to us that additions be made in future than that such things should need to be taken out. There is a long history of Haraldr recorded in those poems that Icelanders delivered to him in person. For that reason he was a great friend to them. And of all the kings of Norway he has been the most popular with the Icelanders. When there was famine there he allowed four ships to carry flour to Iceland, and decreed that the ship-pound should not be worth more than a *hundred* of homespun cloth,⁶⁰⁷ and he gave permission to travel abroad (from Iceland) to all poor people who could get provisions for the journey, and from then on the land made progress towards prosperity and improvement.⁶⁰⁸ King Haraldr sent a bell to Iceland for the church for which King Óláfr had sent the wood, and which has been built at Þingvellir.

People there have mementoes like these of King Haraldr, and

⁶⁰⁷ The *skipfund* was a unit of weight, estimated at 276 pounds (Gelsing 1981, 34). Homespun cloth (*vaðmál*) was used as currency before the use of minted coin. The unit of value was the ell (half a yard); 120 ells (*alnir*) made a hundred; 48 alnir corresponded to 1 mörk (Gelsing 1981, 35–36). The amount specified here and in *Heimskringla* differs from that in *Morkinskinna* (three marks' worth of *vaðmál*, i.e. 144 ells; *Mork* 170).

⁶⁰⁸ The famine in Iceland is recorded in the annals for 1056 and in the addition to *Landnámabók* in Skarðsárabók.

many [262] other fine gifts which he gave to those who visited him in Norway. He made Úlfr Óspaksson, an Icclander, his *marshal* and bestowed the greatest honour on him, and arranged his marriage with Jórunn, daughter of Þorbergr Árnason. Before that Haraldr had married Þóra Þorbergsdóttir, Jórunn's sister. Úlfr had many important descendants; his son was Jóan, father of Erlendr himaldi (Sluggard), father of Archbishop Eysteinn. King Haraldr and Þóra had two sons, the elder called Magnús, the younger Óláfr.

King Haraldr had the Church of Mary built in the north in Niðaróss, and provided large prebends, and he also greatly strengthened the church establishment north in Niðaróss. In his time the Arnmcœðlingar were the most powerful *landed men* in Norway.⁶⁰⁹

King Haraldr fell into dispute with Einarr þambarskelfir because Einarr wanted to be equal in power to King Haraldr in Þrændalög. He never came to Kaupangr when King Haraldr was present there without bringing a large troop, and in Kaupangr he had the temerity to take a proven thief from an assembly so that no judgement could be made, although King Haraldr himself was at the meeting. Then the king said this in the hearing of many people:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 219. The rim-gleam reddener ⁶¹⁰
will run me from the country
unless Einarr kisses
the axe's thin mouth. | Hkr III 124
Mork 171
Hákonar saga Ívarssonar 9 |
|---|--|

[263] People say that Haraldr also uttered this when he looked out from a gallery and saw Einarr walking down a long street with a following of no fewer than five *hundred* (600) men:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 220. Here with ample escort, brisk
Einarr I see passing,
who can scratch the encloser | Hkr III 124
Mork 171–72
Hákonar saga Ívarssonar 8 |
|---|---|

⁶⁰⁹ A genealogy of the Arnmcœðlingar (descendants of Arn móðr) is added to *Fagrskinna* (B) and is translated here as an appendix (see p. 300). *Morkinskinna* adds that their influence derived from their relationship by marriage to the king (Mork 171); besides the marriage of Haraldr to Þóra mentioned here (in fact she was more probably his mistress, since Haraldr was married to Jarisleifr's daughter Ellisif/Elisabeth, p. 191 above), and then to her sister, Finnir Árnason was married to Haraldr's niece Bergljót Hálfðanardóttir (Hkr III 126). The Arn móðr from whom the family took its name was the great-grandfather of Þóra; her father Þorbergr Árnason and his brothers are the powerful men referred to here.

⁶¹⁰ *randa blíks rjóðandi*: 'reddener of the gleam of shield-rims (sword)', warrior.

of kelp,⁶¹¹ þambarskelfir.
 In full power, he forsees
 filling the royal throne;
 I often find fewer
 followers at a jarl's heels.

Skáldsk I 80 (2nd half)

Soon after that King Haraldr had Einarr and his son Eindriði, who was the boldest and most capable of all men, killed. So Einarr was overcome by the long enmity which King Haraldr had kept under control and held back from for a long time previously, as was shown earlier in this narrative, and yet there had been many foreshadowings of it between them before it ended in this way.

CHAPTER 57

At this time the *landed men* were so over-confident that as soon as anything was not wholly to their liking with the king they ran off out of the country to King Sveinn in Denmark, and he made great men of them. [264] To some he gave gold, to some other great honours, as Þjóðólfr says.⁶¹²

221. The keen band has bartered
 its virtue, and in exchange
 a good king for Sveinn given;
 that disgrace is long remembered.

Sexstefja 11

Mork 180 (2nd couplet)

At that time Finnr Árnason left King Haraldr and went south to Denmark, and King Sveinn gave him the rank of jarl. Next King Haraldr called out the *levy* from Norway and went raiding in Denmark with his army. He lay south in Lófufjörðr off Halland, and had already made extensive raids in Halland. King Haraldr had one *hundred* and fifty (180) ships then. King Sveinn came against him there with three *hundred* (360) ships. Then the Danes blocked the Norwegians inside the mooring place before King Haraldr was aware of it. Then King Haraldr asked his men whether they should fight with a troop of half the size of their enemy's or make their escape. They all gave

⁶¹¹ *þangs þjalfi*: 'encloser of seaweed', the sea; to scratch the sea is to sail a ship.

⁶¹² The verse, and introductory phrase, do not occur in *Fsk* (B).

the same answer and told the king to decide, and yet they all said that it was almost impossible.

Then King Haraldr answered, ‘I see that you wish to abide by my decision, and so it shall be. We have such a large and fine force that we will not flee by any means, rather we shall fall dead on top of each other.’

So says Steinn Herdísarson, who was present then on Úlfr’s ship:⁶¹³

222. He said what, hawk-minded, *Nízarvísur* 1
 he thought would happen; *Hkr* III 145–46
 the king claimed there was hardly *Mork* 208
 hope of mercy from him. *Hákonar saga Ívarssonar* 27
 [265] Rather than surrender,
 the ruler, famous, declared,
 each of us must fall on top of
 the other; men readied weapons.

Steinn also says how large the armies of each were:

223. The ruler of lords,⁶¹⁴ resolute, *Nízarvísur* 2
 risked much, who waited *Hkr* III 148
 to meet Danes with half a *hundred* *Mork* 208–09
 and a *hundred*⁶¹⁵ longships;
 Next the angry lord of Hleiðr,⁶¹⁶
 the land of kelp⁶¹⁷ carving,
 it happened, with three *hundred* (360)
 horses of straits⁶¹⁸ went thither.

Then King Haraldr had the trumpets sounded for the laying together of the ships, and he had his *dragon-ship* moved out in front towards the army.

Then Úlfr *stallari* called to his men, ‘Place our ship forward next to the king’s ship,’ as the poet Steinn says:

⁶¹³ Steinn Herdísarson was an Icelandic poet, mentioned in *Landnámabók* (*Landn* 123). Three poems are attributed to him: the *Nízarvísur* (*Knytt* 138) (*Fsk* vv. 222, 223, 226), the *Úlfstokkr* (*Hkr* III 120) (*Fsk* v. 224) and a *drápa* for Óláfr kyrrí (*Fsk* vv. 237, 249–52).

⁶¹⁴ *hersa dróttinn*: ‘lord of *hersir*, nobles’, king.

⁶¹⁵ *halfi annat hundred*: ‘half of a second hundred’, one hundred and fifty (or 180).

⁶¹⁶ *atseti Hleiðrar*, lord of Lejre, king of the Danes.

⁶¹⁷ *þangs lád*: ‘land of seaweed’, sea.

⁶¹⁸ *sunda marr*: ‘horse of straits’, ship.

- [266] 224. Úlfr called on all of us—
 out there long spears quivered—
 when sculling was speeded
 at sea—the king's *marshal*;
 the courageous conqueror's
 keen friend ordered men
 well forward to lay his longship
 alongside the king; men agreed.
- Úlfssflokkur*
Hkr III 147
Mork 209
Håkons saga Ívarssonar 27

Then King Haraldr had the prows and sterns of his ships fastened together. Then the Danes rowed up and the trumpets sounded, with shouting and urging. Then the Danes thought they had the Norwegians in their power. That was the eve of St Lawrence's Day (10th August), and the fighting was begun late in the evening and went on all night. King Haraldr was on his ship *amidships*, shooting, as Þjóðólfr says:

225. All night the king of Upplond
 the elm bow drew, the bold man.
 Showering on shining
 shields the ruler sent arrows.
- Sexteþfa* 14
Hkr III 149
Mork 209

Then the fighting grew fierce. King Sveinn steered his ship and banner towards King Haraldr's banner. Jarl Finn̄r was there, [267] on one side of King Sveinn. This battle did not go as the Danes expected. The Norwegians clustered around King Haraldr and fought well, as Steinn says:

226. It would be a wonder
 if woods of arrow-meeting⁶¹⁹
 did not find out—we fought and
 defended the wide country—
 whether by Niz⁶²⁰ mouth brave Norsemen—
 enough corpses the raven
 received at dawn—dared to
 do battle at Haraldr's side.
- Nizarvísur* 5
Hkr III 267
Mork 211

Then the loss of men veered against the Danes; the Norwegians boarded Danish ships, some fell and some fled; King Sveinn's ship was completely cleared from stem to stern in the end, as Þjóðólfr says:

⁶¹⁹ *ormóts viðr*: 'tree of arrow-meeting (battle)', warrior.

⁶²⁰ *Nizar óss*: mouth of the river Niz (Nizā).

227. Retainers following the fearless
 feeder of the dark raven⁶²¹ *Sexstefja* 15
Mork 211 (first line)
 mostly died before the monarch
 managed to flee on land.
 then the Jutish king's⁶²² full forces
 formed a marvel for the bold
 harmer of the ring;⁶²³ to Hel
 had each foot gone marching.

[268] This poem says that King Sveinn fled ashore in a *cutter* which had been floating by the *after-deck*. In this uproar the Danes cut the cables and headed away. The one who got away first was happiest, but no fewer than seventy Danish ships were stripped, as Þjóðólfr says:

228. They say at least seventy
 splendid ships of the people *Sexstefja* 16
 of Sveinn, Sogn's able ruler⁶²⁴ *Hkr* III 151
 stripped in a moment.⁶²⁵ *Mork* 211

Then the Danish army fled while the Norwegians pursued them; they remembered then the rowing in the Sea of Jótland, and drove them in flight until some ran ashore, some were scattered inside the fjord, and some out to sea. There was such a great loss of men that no one could count it, and it was almost all from among the Danes. Jarl Finn̄r was captured; at that time he had almost gone blind. He was sitting on his *after-deck* when the flight began, and was caught then and led before King Haraldr. It is said that King Sveinn had six jarls with him in the battle, as Þjóðólfr says:

229. Six Danish jarls for success *Sexstefja* 17
 Sveinn need not reward, *Hkr* III 151–52
 who add to the incitement *Mork* 213
 of arrow-play,⁶²⁶ in this one battle.
 [269] Finn̄r Arnason, battle-fierce,

⁶²¹ *dokks hrafns fæðir*: 'feeder of the dark raven', warrior.

⁶²² *Jóta konungr*: 'king of Jutes', i.e. of the Danes.

⁶²³ *hrings skerðir*: 'damager of the ring', giver away of treasure, generous lord.

⁶²⁴ *Sogns gramr*: 'king of Sogn', i.e. of Norway.

⁶²⁵ *svipstund*: 'a moment'. This is an emendation following other texts of *Fsk sviptu*.

⁶²⁶ *orleiks hvot*: 'incitement of arrow-play', boldness in battle.

refusing to rescue his
 courageous heart, was captured
 in the core of the army.

Then the jarl was set down *amidships* before King Haraldr. Then the king was very cheerful, and said:

‘We meet here now, Finn̄r, but the last time was in Norway; the Danish retainers have not stood by you very firmly, and now the Norwegians have the ill work of dragging you, blind, after themselves, as they must do to keep you alive.’

Then said the jarl, ‘The Norwegians have much ill work, and the worst of all is what you order them to do.’

Then the king answered, ‘Will you accept quarter, although it is not deserved?’

Then said the jarl, ‘Not from your dog.’

‘Will you accept quarter from your kinsman Magnús?’⁶²⁷ He was commanding a ship then.

The jarl said, ‘How can that whelp offer quarter?’

Then the king laughed and found it fun to have to do with him, and said, ‘Will you accept quarter from your kinswoman Þóra?’

The jarl asked, ‘Is she here?’

The king said, ‘Here she is.’

Then Finn̄r uttered a nasty speech that has since been remembered, showing how angry he was, so that he was unable to restrain his speech:

‘No wonder you have bitten hard today, since the mare has come with you.’⁶²⁸

Jarl Finn̄r was given quarter, and he stayed with King Haraldr for a while. With King Haraldr in the battle of Niz were both his sons, Magnús and Óláfr, and Eysteinn orri and Hákon Ívarsson.

[270] King Sveinn fled ashore with one other man, and they went to a small farm, because the Norwegians were looking for him everywhere through the large farms and villages. There was an old housewife there. She asked what sort of men they were.

⁶²⁷ *Magnús*: son of King Haraldr and of Þóra, who was Finn̄r’s niece.

⁶²⁸ This is an allusion to horse-fighting, which was a popular entertainment throughout Scandinavia, pairs of stallions being urged on by their owners to bite each other (Solheim 1956). For the complex of metaphorical insult involving animals in Old Norse, see Finlay 2001, Taylor 1992.

The king told his companion to answer. This man answered the old woman:

‘We are travellers, and need your hospitality.’

The old woman replied, ‘If you are as important as you appear to be, acting like powerful men, you must be able to give us news, whether these kings have been fighting at all, and what was the meaning of the banging and crashing we have been hearing all night?’

Then the man said, ‘It is more than likely that they have been fighting.’

Then the old woman asked, ‘Which came off better?’

He answered, ‘The Norwegians won, mother.’

Then said the old woman, ‘Has our king been killed?’

He answered, ‘He has fled, but is not killed.’

Then the old woman said something very foolish: ‘Wretched are we, and woe is us, for we have a king both cowardly and lame.’

Then answered the man who up till then had said less, ‘On the contrary, mother, I think it more likely that he is not cowardly, though he is not blessed with victory.’

Before they went to eat, the old woman brought them a bowl of water, and the one walking behind washed first, then took hold of the middle of the towel to dry himself. The old woman grabbed at the towel and snatched it from him.

‘Take the end of the towel, and don’t make it all wet at once.’

Then that silent man said, ‘It may yet happen, mother, if God wills, that I will gain enough honour to dry myself on the middle of the towel.’

This is a light-hearted story and hardly worth telling, except for the reason that it shows the difference between wisdom and foolishness, as in what has been told elsewhere of King Haraldr and Jarl Finnrr. Then he who had the upper hand gave way; that was an honour to him, not degradation. The jarl showed what his temper was, for he could not speak other than well of King Sveinn whom he had previously been serving, and harshly of those whom he had opposed. But [271] the king regarded it like the speech of a child; and everyone has regarded it so ever since.

In the autumn King Haraldr went back to Norway victorious and with booty, while King Sveinn raised troops and received his kingdom. Soon afterwards a great leader, Jarl Hákon Ívarsson, who was married then to Úlfhildr, daughter of Magnús góði, went to Denmark,

and stayed there for a while with King Sveinn.⁶²⁹ He fought against King Haraldr south in Jótland. Hákon then carried the banner that had belonged to King Magnús. Haraldr was victorious there, and Hákon fled, and had lost the greater part of his army.

The battle of Niz took place in the sixteenth year of King Haraldr's reign. Shortly before the battle of Niz, King Haraldr quarrelled with the people of Upplönd. They said that King Óláfr had given them concessions in the law in many matters compared to people in other parts of Norway, both in respect of the *levy* and many aspects of governance being entrusted to the *bændr*, as they were not in other parts of the country. They said that King Óláfr had granted them these privileges after the battle of Nesjar because the people of Upplönd had given him help when he was fighting for control of the whole of Norway and Jarl Sveinn fled the country. King Haraldr did not like that and said that only one royal law must prevail in the whole of Norway; as Þjóðólfr says:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 230. Landsmen keen to quarrel
the king hardly permitted—
men acted monstrously—
to maintain the land's law,
[272] but trolls broke brushwood
in the bounding heel-keels ⁶³⁰
of the prince's opponents
who caused the people to act so. | <i>Sexstefja</i> 19
<i>Mork</i> 188 |
|--|--|

King Haraldr went with an army inland to Raumaríki and burned settlements extensively, as Þjóðólfr says:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 231. The humbler of Holmbúar ⁶³¹
harshly bridled the Raumar.
Fierce Haraldr's forces
fought there, I think, strongly. | <i>Sexstefja</i> 20
<i>Hkr</i> III 166
<i>Mork</i> 188 |
|---|--|

⁶²⁹ Magnús's daughter, Ragnhildr, has apparently been confused with his sister Úlfhildr (p. 144). *Morkinskinna* includes extended passages concerning the dealings of Haraldr with Hákon Ívarsson. A divergent account survives in the fragmentary *Hákonar saga Ívarssonar*, apparently composed c. 1210; this is followed by *Heimskringla* in preference to *Morkinskinna* (Schach 1993, Andersson and Gade in *Morkinskinna* 2000, 15–20).

⁶³⁰ *hæls hleypikjóll*: 'running ship of the heel', shoe. *Brjóta hrís í skó e-m*, 'break twigs on someone's shoes', means to beat or cause someone trouble.

⁶³¹ *Holmbúar*: 'island-dwellers', Danes, or those who live in the Danish islands.

Fire was placed in reprisal;
the prince prevailed; then could
the hound of the roof,⁶³² high-leaping,
to heel bring wretched farmers.

From there he went up to Hringaríki and burned there. Þjóðólfr goes on to tell how they submitted to him:

232. For life people pleaded. *Sexstefja* 21
Fire imposed on the Hringar *Hkr* III 166
harsh judgement, before Hóalfr's *Mork* 188
harmer's⁶³³ downfall was achieved.

[273] After that the landholders made peace with the king and kept the laws all according to the king's requirement, and all his commands, as Þjóðólfr says:

233. All folk to the war-starling's feeder⁶³⁴ *Sexstefja* 10
defer; they have no choice but *Hkr* III 166
to agree to what orders *Mork* 188
are given men by the king.

In the third year after the battle of Niz peace was made between King Haraldr and King Sveinn on the advice of all the Norwegians and Danes, on the terms that each king was to govern his own kingdom, and King Haraldr was to have free possession of Norway, and King Sveinn of Denmark, and neither was to pay compensation to the other. Then harrying that had started there was to cease, and all were to keep what fortune had granted. This peace was to last while they were kings, as Þjóðólfr says:

234. The king of the Hǫrðar⁶³⁵ hung up *Sexstefja* 22
hostility at last; *Hkr* III 167
peace began in the third year; *Mork* 225
iron had cut shields off-shore.

⁶³² *hrótgarnr*: 'roof-hound', fire.

⁶³³ *Hóalfrs galli*: 'defect or damager of Hóalfr', fire. Hóalfr (later Hálfr), a Viking king whose adventures are related in *Hálfrs saga ok Hálfrsrekka*, was killed when his stepfather Ásmundr set fire to the hall in which he was drinking (*Hálfrs saga* chs 12–13). Snorri cites *Hálfrs bani* 'Hálfr's killer' as a kenning for fire (*Skáldsk* I 39), and it occurs in the 9th-century *Ynglingatal*.

⁶³⁴ *folkstara feitir*: 'feeder of the battle-starling (raven)', warrior.

⁶³⁵ *Hǫrða fylkir*: 'king of the Hordalanders', i.e. of Norway.

CHAPTER 58

[274] In the nineteenth year of the reign of King Haraldr, Játvarðr góði (Edward the Good, the Confessor) died in England on the fifth day of Christmas, and on the sixth day of Christmas the English accepted Haraldr (Harold), son of Goðini Úlfnaðarson (Godwine son of Wulfnoð) and of Gyða, daughter of Þorgils sprakaleggr, as their king. He was consecrated as king in London in St Paul's Church on the eighth day of Christmas. King Játvarðr had been married to Gyða, daughter of Goðini, and Játvarðr had no children. Then the kingship of England passed out of the family of King Aðalsteinn góði. Jarl Tósti (Tostig), Goðini's second son, thought his claim to the kingdom no⁶³⁶ worse than Haraldr's, and he wanted to stand for election against his brother before all the men of the country. He asked that all the chieftains of the land and all the people should choose the one they preferred as king, and many people said that Tósti was a wiser man and no less fit to be king, but Haraldr seemed more suited for kingship since he had the title and had been enthroned, and had received consecration as king. He had possession of the royal halls and treasuries, and did not want to give up power, since he had full control of the resources of the land.

CHAPTER 59

When Haraldr learned of his brother's discontent he forced him out of the country, and Jarl Tósti went to Denmark to see his kinsman King Sveinn and asked him to give him support and backing to win his rightful status. King Sveinn offered him [275] power under himself in Denmark. Then Tósti replied:

'Will you not give me the strength and backing of your power to achieve my rightful status? With your might and my planning, I want to win England as your mother's brother Knútr did, or the part of the kingdom that is most devoted to me.'

Then King Sveinn answered, 'I am so much less of a ruler than my kinsman gamli Knútr that I am hardly able to hold Denmark

⁶³⁶ At this point there is a lacuna in *Fsk* (B). Four leaves of the MS from which it was copied were missing. *Fsk* (A) is followed to p. 235 below.

against the Norwegians. But gamli Knútr gained all Denmark by inheritance and England by war and good luck, and yet for a while it seemed no less likely that he would remain lying there. But Norway he gained without a battle. Now I must moderate my actions more to fit my limitations than the success of my kinsman gamli Knútr.'

Then Jarl Tósti said, 'Our kinsmen are becoming our enemies. Their enemies must be our kinsmen, then.'

The jarl parted from the king of Denmark in such a way that they were both angry.

CHAPTER 60

And now Tósti made his way back to Norway and met King Haraldr there, and complained of his problems to him, and offered him his service and alliance. Now many wise men met there; each spoke cheerfully to the other, the king spoke of the jarl's great unhappiness in that he had been driven from his kingdom without cause.

The jarl began his address where Hqrða-Knútr, son of gamli Knútr, ruled England, and how an oath had been sworn between King Magnús and Hqrða-Knútr, and next how King Magnús had become the rightful heir of Hqrða-Knútr, and how he had shown great forbearance to King Játvarðr in not claiming the possessions and power that were in England as well as those in Denmark:

'Now I believe that no other heir of King Magnús has been born than you, lord, and what do you consider to be the truth?' said the jarl.

In the course of this discussion King Haraldr considered the matter carefully; they had many meetings, and [276] their conversation ended with Jarl Tósti swearing allegiance to King Haraldr, and he promised to join and support the king on an expedition west to England. The king promised him in exchange authority and favour in proportion to the increase in strength of his own power.

It was discussed in everyone's house, and yet most often among the king's following, how King Haraldr's expedition to England would turn out. People reckoned up how many great deeds Haraldr had done, and said that he would now as before find nothing beyond his capability. Some pointed out that England is a heavily populated kingdom. There was also a troop there called *þingamenn*. It was made up of men of many lands, though most from Scandinavia, and they

are so tested and experienced in battle that the support of one *þingamaðr* was better than that of two of Haraldr's men.⁶³⁷

And that summer Úlfr stallari died, and when the king turned away from his burial he spoke words that were a fine memorial to Úlfr:

'Here lies the man who was most noble-minded and loyal to his lord.'

Then Styrkár became the sole *marshal*, though before they had shared the position.

CHAPTER 61

In the last part of winter when spring was about to come King Haraldr sent a command throughout his kingdom that the army should make ready, troops and ships, to leave the country in the summer, and appointed who was to go from each *shire*. Now everyone who has known the history of this expedition says that no better choice of men has been made ready for any single expedition from Norway. The king had cargo ships and also *cutters* made ready with an enormous quantity of provisions, and he appointed his son Magnús to stay behind in charge of the kingdom, but his son Óláfr he took with him. When King Haraldr was making ready for this expedition many revelations were made to people in dreams.

CHAPTER 62

[277] Now when King Haraldr had put out to sea with his fully-prepared ships and his army, he himself dreamed that, as it seemed to him, a man came to him, and he thought he recognised his brother King Óláfr. The man uttered this verse to the king:

⁶³⁷ The English troop of *þingamenn*, consisting of six thousand picked men, was established by Knútr inn ríki in about 1018 and maintained until 1066. It is mentioned in *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* II 19) and its foundation is related in *Knýtlinga saga* (*Knýt* 100), though both these sources suggest that it was in place in the reign of Knútr's father Sveinn tjuguskeggr. The word probably derives from Old English *þeningmann* 'serving man'. At the corresponding point in *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 175) and *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 265) a verse attributed to Úlfr stallari is cited which refers to two men fleeing before one *þingamanni*.

235. The great stout king, to his glory *Hkr* III 178
 gained mostly victory; *Mork* 267
 To a saintly fall I was fated
 on the field, for I stayed at home;
 I still dread that, ruler,
 doom for you is waiting;
 you sate the troll-wife's greedy
 steeds;⁶³⁸ God does not cause⁶³⁹ this.

And then his *forecastle man* dreamed that he seemed to see a certain woman, bigger than human beings. She was riding a wolf and carrying a red shield, and said this:

236. The she-troll makes the red shield *Hkr* III 177
 shine, while war approaches. *Mork* 266
 The wife of Aurnir's offspring⁶⁴⁰
 observes the king's undoing.
 [278] The woman, jaw working,⁶⁴¹
 has worried men's bodies;
 crazy, with blood the creature
 colours the wolf's mouth.

CHAPTER 63

Now King Haraldr sailed first to Orkney, and left behind there his wife Ellisif and his daughter Maria.⁶⁴² He took away with him from there Jarl Páll, son of Jarl Þorfinnr and of Ingibjörg, daughter of Jarl Finnur Árnason. From there King Haraldr took his army south to England, and approached it so that he made his landing at the place called Cleveland. Everyone took to flight. He took hostages and tribute from the land and went on south to Scarborough, overcame it with fire, and subdued all the north country under him. From there he sailed the fleet south to the Humber and went up

⁶³⁸ *fíks trolls fíkr*: 'horse of the greedy troll'; with transference of epithet, 'greedy horse of the troll(-wife)', wolf; *fókum* and *fýllar* are the readings of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *fræknum* and *fýlki*.

⁶³⁹ *verldrát guð*: this is emended from other texts, where *Fsk* has *veldr atgerð*.

⁶⁴⁰ *brúðr Aurnis jóða*: 'woman of the children of Aurnir (giant)', giantess.

⁶⁴¹ *sveiflandkjapti*: 'with swinging jaws'. *kjapta* is the reading of *Hkr* and *Mork* where *Fsk* has *-gefta*.

⁶⁴² In *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 266) Haraldr leaves behind Þóra and Maria; in *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 179) Ellisif, Maria and (his other daughter) Ingigerðr.

along the river to the Ouse.⁶⁴³ There the jarls of Northumbria, Mǫrukári (Morkere) and Jarl Valþjófr of Hundatún (Waltheof of Huntingdon)⁶⁴⁴ came against them with an overwhelming force, which had been gathering together all the autumn. King Haraldr offered them resistance, went up onto the river bank and drew up his troops there with one flank of the army facing towards the river and a second towards a certain ditch. And that was deep and full of water. The jarls sent their army with all its men slowly down along the river above the king's standard. The ranks were thickest there, but sparsest beside the ditch. [279] When the fighting had been going on for a short time, the flank of Haraldr's army lining the ditch gave way, and the Englishmen pressed them hard at that moment, expecting that the Norwegians would flee. King Haraldr with his troop advanced so hard that (the enemy) gave way before him in two directions. Then flight broke out in the land army, and the flank that was nearest to the ditch jumped out into it. And Mǫrukári had been moving with the standard that was nearest to the ditch. Jarl Valþjófr fled from the battle up along the river, and only those who went with him got away. There Mǫrukári fell, and men so thickly around him that the ditch was full of dead men. So says Steinn:⁶⁴⁵

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 237. Men drowned, submerged; | <i>Óláfsdrápa</i> 4 |
| many died in the river. | <i>Hkr</i> III 180–81 |
| No few soldiers soon lay | <i>Mork</i> 268 |
| around young Mǫrukári. | |
| The men's lord ⁶⁴⁶ forced on, fearless, | |
| the flight; before the brave leader | |
| headlong the army hastened. | |
| <i>Headed off, strong-minded, from under . . .</i> ⁶⁴⁷ | |

⁶⁴³ The site of the disembarkation is identified as Riccall, ten miles down-river from York, on the authority of John of Worcester (II 602–03) and Symeon of Durham (II 180).

⁶⁴⁴ All MSS have *Motokári af Handatúni* in place of *Mǫrukári ok Valþjófr jarl af Hundatúni* 'Mǫrukári and Jarl Valþjófr of Huntingdon', which has been supplied in accordance with *Morkinskinna* and the following text of *Fagrskinna*. Morkere was earl of Northumbria; Waltheof was the son of a former earl of Northumbria, although Norse sources including *Fagrskinna* consistently count him among the sons of Godwine (see note 648). There is no support in English or Norman sources for Waltheof's presence at the battle on the Ouse. According to these the English forces were led by Morkere and his brother Edwin, earl of Mercia. The battle is located at Fulford Gate according to Symeon of Durham (II 180).

⁶⁴⁵ Steinn Herðisarson; see note 613.

⁶⁴⁶ *fira dróttinn*: 'lord of men', king.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ríkhundaðr helt undan . . .* is a variant of one line of a *klofastef* 'split refrain':

He composed this about Óláfr, and that was on the eve of St Matthew's Day (21st September), which fell on a Thursday that year. Mǫrukári and Valþjófr were brothers of Haraldr Guðinason.⁶⁴⁸

CHAPTER 64

[280] After this battle all the people of the neighbouring districts submitted to King Haraldr, but some fled. Then King Haraldr made ready to attack the town of York, and established his army a short distance from Stamford Bridge because the king had achieved such a great victory against important leaders that the most part of the army had become too frightened to offer resistance, and the townspeople decided to send a deputation to King Haraldr with a message, offering themselves and the town too into his power. All this was proclaimed, so that on the Sunday all the most powerful men agreed to submit to King Haraldr, and gave hostages, sons of noble men, because Jarl Tósti knew all the details of the people in the town, and that evening King Haraldr went to his ships with an easy victory, and they were all in very high spirits. And on the following day, the Monday, an assembly had been called in the town, and then Haraldr was to appoint men of authority over the town and assign rights and revenues.

CHAPTER 65

But that same evening Haraldr Guðinason came to the town from the south with an overwhelming army, and he rode straight into the town with the consent and goodwill of all the townspeople. At once all the gates and roads were secured so that the news would not reach the Norwegians, and this army stayed overnight in the town.

Ríklundaðr veit undir/ sík baztan gram miklu/ Óláfr borinn sólu 'Strong-minded, Óláfr knows himself to be by far the best king born under the sun', part of which also concludes verses 250–52 below. All must belong to the poem about Haraldr's son Óláfr, referred to immediately after this verse, but the *fira dróttinn* 'lord of men' in this verse may be Haraldr.

⁶⁴⁸ *Fagrskinna* agrees with other Norse sources in including Morkere and Waltheof among the sons of Godwine. In fact Morkere was the son of Earl Ælfgar of Mercia, Waltheof's father was Earl Siward of Northumbria.

On Monday, after King Haraldr had eaten breakfast, he had the trumpets blown for going ashore, and he prepared and divided the troop between those who were to go and those who were to stay behind. He had two go ashore from each division for every one that stayed behind. Then Jarl Tósti and his division prepared to go ashore with King Haraldr [281], while those who stayed behind to look after the ships were Óláfr, the king's son, and Eysteinn orri, son of Þorbergr Árnason,⁶⁴⁹ who was the most excellent of all the *landed men* at that time and most in favour with the king. King Haraldr had promised his daughter Maria to him. And that day the weather was hot and sunny, and they left their mailcoats behind and went ashore with shields and swords, helmets and spears, and some had bows, and they were all in great high spirits.

CHAPTER 66

Now when they had almost reached the town they saw a large force riding towards them, and they saw there many fine horses, and men carrying fine shields and bright mailcoats. Now the king halted his troop and had Jarl Tósti called to him and asked what force that would be. The jarl answered that he thought it was more than likely to be hostile, and he said also that otherwise it might be some of his kinsmen who wanted to approach the king with humility and friendship, 'and to offer you support and allegiance in exchange'.

Then said the king, 'We shall keep our troop halted, because I am curious to know what this force may be.'

Now this force seemed to them bigger and bigger the nearer it came, and it was like looking at broken ice, as the weapons were shining. Then Jarl Tósti said:

'Let us consider wisely and well, for it cannot be denied that they are hostile, and it must be the king himself.'

Then King Haraldr asked, 'What is your advice?'

The jarl answered, 'First, to turn back to the ships for our troops and weapons as quickly as possible, and yet to resist as best we can, or otherwise to guard the ships so that horsemen cannot get control of them or of us.'

⁶⁴⁹ So also *Hkr* III 184. *Morkinskinna* has 'son of Þorbrandr Árnason' (*sonr Þorbrandz Arna s.*) (*Mork* 271), which is presumably a mistake.

Then the king replied, 'I want to follow a different plan. Let us put our fastest horses under three bold men, and let them ride as [282] hard as they can and say what has happened, and then support will come to us from our men, because the English must still have a hard time of it before we are overcome.'

Then Tósti answered, 'This is for you to decide, like other things,' and said he was no more eager to flee than anyone else.

CHAPTER 67

Now King Haraldr had his standard, which was called Landeyða (Land-waster), raised, and the man who carried the standard was called Friðrekr. And in another place Jarl Tósti set up his standard. Then King Haraldr spoke:

'As soon as the English ride at you,' he said, 'thrust down the butts of your spears into the ground, with the points set high enough to reach a man's waist. And those standing further back in the formation are also to set their spear-butts in the ground with the points facing the breasts of their horses. Let us now all aim our *halberds* at them like this, and the archers are to be on the flanks behind the formation, and let us stand fast and not stir a foot's pace, but keep aiming forward.'

And by the time the troops were drawn up the English army had also arrived. Then those who rode in front stopped and waited for those who were coming behind.

CHAPTER 68

King Haraldr Sigurðarson was riding a black horse with a white blaze in front of his formation and inspected the position of the troop, and he directed some to stand further forward, according to his wish. And as he was riding the horse fell under him, and the king fell forward off it and said:

'A fall means a fortunate journey.'⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁵⁰ 'The Old Norse proverb *Fall er farar heill* tells us that stumbling in spite of its usual catastrophical connotations can be lucky for somebody who sets out on a journey or is in the process of travelling' Almqvist 1974–76 [1991, 54]. Almqvist

Then King Haraldr of the English said to those Norsemen who were with him:

‘Did you recognise that big man in that black tunic and the bright helmet who just pitched forward off his horse?’

They answered, ‘We know him; that was the king of the Norwegians.’

Then [283] the English king said, ‘He is a big and princely man, but it is more than likely that his luck has left him now.’

Now twenty horsemen, all in full chain mail, rode up in front of the army of Norwegians. Then one horseman said:

‘Where is Jarl Tósti, is he in the company or not?’

He replied, ‘That is not to be hidden; you can find him here.’

Then the horseman spoke again: ‘Your brother King Haraldr sends you greetings, and also offers you quarter, and the whole of Northumbria, and rather than that you and he should fight he will give you a third of his kingdom to share with him.’

Then the jarl answered, ‘Then something is on offer other than the enmity and disgrace offered in the winter, and if the offer had been made earlier many a man would have been alive and well who is not now, and the kingdom of England would have been none the worse. Now I accept this offer, but what will you offer King Haraldr for his trouble?’

Then the horseman answered, ‘He has said something to you about how much of England he would grant him. He is to have a length of seven feet, and more according to how much taller he is than other men.’

Then the jarl replied, ‘Go now and tell King Haraldr to prepare for battle, because what the Norwegians said about Jarl Tósti will not prove true: that he would betray King Haraldr and break with him as soon as he had to fight about it, and would swell the ranks of his enemies. Rather, we shall all follow the same course, rather die with honour, or gain England with victory.’

Now the horsemen rode back. Then King Haraldr Sigurðarson said to the jarl:

‘Who was that well-spoken man?’

The jarl replied, ‘That was King Haraldr Goðinason.’

argues that the proverb ‘contains an element of incantation’ designed to ward off the evil foreboded by the fall (1974–76 [1991, 56]).

Then said King Haraldr, 'This was kept from me for too long. They had come so close to our troop that this Haraldr would not have been able to tell news of the death of our [284] men.'

'That is true, lord,' said the jarl; 'it was a rash move for such a leader, and it might have been as you say. I admit that. And yet he wanted to offer quarter and great power to his brother, and I would certainly be called a worse leader if we had chosen that alternative rather than for me to await old age as the killer of my brother; and yet it is better to receive death at one's brother's hand than to kill him.'

'This was a little king,' said King Haraldr, 'and stood well in his stirrup.'

Men say that King Haraldr spoke this verse:

238. We go forward
in formation
without byrnies,
bearing dark blades.
Helmets shine—
I have not got mine.⁶⁵¹
Now our armour
is down at the ships.

Hkr III 187–88
Mork 276

His mailcoat was called Emma; it came down to the middle of his legs and was so strong that no weapon could make an impression on it. Then King Haraldr said: 'That is a badly composed verse; now I'll do another one better,'⁶⁵² and he recited this:

239. In shield's curve we crouch not
before the crash of weapons
in fight; so bade the falcon's-
field-Hildir,⁶⁵³ true to her word.
To hold my helmet-stand⁶⁵⁴

Hkr III 188
Mork 276

⁶⁵¹ I.e. 'my mailcoat', since the gender of *mína* agrees with *brynja* 'coat of mail'.

⁶⁵² The 'inferior' verse is in the simpler *fornyrðislag* metre.

⁶⁵³ *valteigs Hildir*: 'Hildir (valkyrie) of the falcon's strip of land (the arm, where the bird perches in hunting)' woman. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson suggests that the woman referred to is Haraldr's mother (*Hkr* III 188n).

⁶⁵⁴ *hjalmstallr*: 'helmet platform', head.

high the necklace-wearer⁶⁵⁵
 once told me, when in din of
 weapons⁶⁵⁶ Hlökk's ice⁶⁵⁷ and skulls⁶⁵⁸ meet.

Then Þjóðólfr composed this verse:

240. I will not turn away from—
 the will of God prevails—
 the young heirs of the ruler
 if the king falls to the ground.
 The sun shines on no fairer
 future king than those two;
 true hawks are the wise-ruling
 Haraldr's avengers.

Hkr III 188–89

Mork 274

CHAPTER 69

Now the English charged against the Norwegians, and a strong resistance was made against them, and the *halberds* were placed as was described before, and that was especially effective against the horses. Then both sides fought [286] with all their strength, and the slaughter was slow to begin with, and their numbers were so unequal that a large number of the English encircled them, and attacked them in small groups. And when they got behind them the formation fell apart, and many men in both armies were killed, and King Haraldr advanced from the breach with his shield and sword and struck at both men and horses on either side, so that nothing could touch him. So says the poet Stúfr:

241. Like the wind he went there,⁶⁵⁹
 warden of spears' downpour,⁶⁶⁰
 blithe through⁶⁶¹ the battle,

Stúfsdrápa 8

Mork 277

⁶⁵⁵ *menskorð*: 'necklace-support', woman. This is the reading of *Hkr* and *Mork* where *Fsk* has *menn skurð*.

⁶⁵⁶ *gnýr malma*: 'din of metal, weapons', battle.

⁶⁵⁷ *Hlakkar iss*: 'ice of Hlökk (valkyrie)', sword.

⁶⁵⁸ *ok hausar*: corrected from other texts; *Fsk* has *at housum*.

⁶⁵⁹ *vekki*: emendation of MSS *væte*. Other texts have *vetki*, a form of *vætki* 'never, not at all'.

⁶⁶⁰ *geira regns varðandi*: 'guardian of the rain of spears (battle)', warrior. *regns* is the reading of *Mork* where *Fsk* has *hreggs*.

⁶⁶¹ *gognum*: emendation of MSS *glyggju*.

barely of his life heedful.
 The king did not flee fire
 or fitted metal⁶⁶² thereafter,
 if under the storm's high-seat⁶⁶³
 this example be fitting.

And Arnórr jarlaskáld said this:

242. Loath to make do,⁶⁶⁴ the leader had no little courage; the king's brave heart quaked not in the crash of helmets,⁶⁶⁵ [287] where looking at the leader of lords,⁶⁶⁶ the army saw how the bloody sword of the strong subduer of princes⁶⁶⁷ cut men.	<i>Erfidrápa for Haraldr</i> <i>harðráði</i> 14 <i>Hkr</i> III 189–90 <i>Mork</i> 277–78
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Then King Haraldr was shot in the throat from in front, so that blood poured at once from his mouth. That was his death-blow, and next he fell to the ground. When this event had taken place, the English attacked so fiercely that all the troop standing nearest to the king fell.

CHAPTER 70

And now Jarl Tósti realised that the king had fallen; he turned at once towards where he saw the standard Landeyða, and he urged men on to the attack and gave orders for the same standard still to be carried before him, and there was a sharp battle, because all the

⁶⁶² *jarn et fellda*: 'fitted, fastened iron', i.e. weapons; cf. *hlýr oxar við hlyn feldrar* 'blades of the axe fastened to the maplewood (handle)' in a verse of Einarr Skúlason (*Skáldsk* I 57). *LP* surmises the meaning as 'the drawn sword' (128, s.v. *fella*).

⁶⁶³ *éls erkistóll*: 'archbishop's seat of the snow-shower', sky; 'under the sky' means on earth; *erki-* is emended from MSS *ekki-*.

⁶⁶⁴ *hlítstygg*: emended according to other texts, where *Fsk* has *liðstygg*. Faulkes translates 'mediocrity-avoiding, ("shy of what will just do")' (*Skáldsk* II 313); Whaley proposes 'self-reliant' as an alternative (1998, 288–89).

⁶⁶⁵ *hjalmpřima*: 'crashing of helmets', battle. *hjalmpřimu* is an emendation in accordance with the other texts; *Fsk* *hjalmpřimu* 'helmet-thunder' is also possible.

⁶⁶⁶ *hersa þengill*: 'lord of nobles', king.

⁶⁶⁷ *doglinga hneitir*: 'subduer of princes', warlike king.

Norwegians urged each other on and told each other that they would not flee. Then Haraldr Goðinason had his trumpet blown and called for the battle to be halted and offered quarter to his brother Jarl Tósti and all his troop, but all the Norwegians cried out at once and said that they would accept no quarter from him; rather, they said that they would be victorious against their enemies or else all lie there dead around their king. So says Arnórr:

- [288] 243. Not undignified⁶⁶⁸ was the death *Haraldsdrápa* 15
of the dread king; the treasure- *Hkr* III 191
inlaid spears did not spare *Mork* 278
the slayer of wrongdoers.⁶⁶⁹
The renowned lord's liegemen
elected much rather
all to fall round the king, fierce
in fight, than wanting quarter.

In this lull before the armies engaged, Þjóðólfr composed this verse:

244. A heavy price people *Hkr* III 190
have paid. Now I declare *Mork* 279
the host betrayed; Haraldr *Hemings þátr* 53
had men travel west needlessly.
So ended the life of the leader, *Skáldsk* I 104 (2nd half)
leaving us all, the brave one,
in a tight place; the much-praised
prince received a death-wound.

[289] Then the battle began again, and was most furious; and it was not long before Jarl Tósti fell.

CHAPTER 71

Now at that moment Eysteinn orri arrived with the troop which had been on the ships, and they were all in full mail, and then the battle began for the third time, and Eysteinn took over Landeyða, the

⁶⁶⁸ *eigi auðligr* 'not unadorned', i.e. honoured by the presence of gilded weapons and loyal followers. This is just one of four possible senses suggested by Diana Whaley, the others being 'not fated', 'not profitable (for the poet)', and 'not easy, painful' (1998, 292–93).

⁶⁶⁹ *hlenna sæfir*: 'one who puts criminals to sleep', righteous king.

king's standard, and then the fighting was at its most intense by far, and it was mostly Englishmen that fell, and they were even on the point of fleeing. Now Eysteinn and his men grew very tired, because they had been marching for a long time in coats of ring-mail, and the weather became very hot and sunny so that they were almost unable to go on, and then they all threw off their mailcoats. And this battle turned out as was to be expected, that those who had greater numbers and were better armed were more successful, and there Eysteinn orri and almost all the important men died. And this battle was called Orrahrið (Orri's Storm). That happened in the latter part of the day. It was as the saying goes, that 'there's always one that gets away',⁶⁷⁰ because a longer life was fated for some, and so they escaped.

Styrkárr the *marshal*, that most celebrated man, escaped there, for he got himself a horse and rode away in the evening; a cold wind had come up by then, and Styrkárr was wearing only a tunic, with a helmet on his head and a drawn sword in his hand. Now he paused to throw off his weariness, and at that moment a wagoner came up to him, wearing a long leather jacket.

Now Styrkárr asked, 'Will you sell your jacket, *bóndi*?'

He answered, 'Certainly not to you; you must be a Norwegian, I recognise your speech.'

Then Styrkárr answered, 'What will you do if I am a Norwegian?'

[290] He replied, 'I'd like to kill you, but the trouble is that I have no weapon that would be any use.'

Then Styrkárr said, 'If you can't kill me, *bóndi*, I'll see if I can kill you,'—then he raised his sword and swung it at the *bóndi*'s neck so that the head flew off. After that he put on the leather jacket, then jumped on his horse and galloped off to the ships.

CHAPTER 72

King Haraldr's son Óláfr had not gone ashore, and with him was Skúli, Jarl Tósti's son.⁶⁷¹ When the news reached them they prepared

⁶⁷⁰ *æ komr einn hvaðan*: one always comes from anywhere'. The MS readings *eg*, *æ*, translated here as 'always', could also mean *eigi* 'not', and are so interpreted in Bjarni Einarsson's edition (*Fsk* 289), but the sense is inappropriate.

⁶⁷¹ On Skúli see below, note 692.

for departure with the troop of Norwegians who were left, not having fallen; they took their ships out to sea, and in autumn, as soon as they got a fair wind, they sailed to Orkney and stayed there for the winter.

On the same day that King Haraldr fell in England his daughter Maria died in Orkney. People said that the two of them had shared one person's life.

And the following summer Óláfr, with all his troop, went to Norway. That same summer Óláfr became king in Norway with his brother Magnús. They were both kings for a while until King Magnús became fatally ill, and he was in poor health for some time because he had a kind of illness called *reformr*.⁶⁷² He left a son who was called Hákon. He was being fostered in Guðbrandsdalar with Steigar-Þórir.

CHAPTER 73

Magnús had held the northern part of the land (when sharing) with his brother Óláfr, and Óláfr the eastern (the area around Vík). Now, after the death of his brother Magnús, Óláfr was sole king in Norway. He was large in every part of his body, and [291] it is said by everyone in Norway that no one has seen a more handsome man or more princely in appearance. He had yellow hair and a fair skin, with very fine eyes and limbs; he was most often taciturn and with little to say at assemblies, but cheerful over ale and fair of speech with his friends, and a moderate man in all respects.

CHAPTER 74

In that same summer, just after King Haraldr Sigurðarson fell in England, there came to England with his army Vilhjálmr bastardr (William the Bastard), jarl of Rouen. His father was Rotbertr longespée (Robert Long-Sword),⁶⁷³ and his father was Ríkarðr (Richard),

⁶⁷² *reformr*: literally 'fox-worm', i.e. a red rash; this is the name for ringworm, which would hardly be fatal. Reichborn-Kjennerud (1942, 118–21) argues that Magnús's illness was ergotism, a disease caused by a fungus that infects rye and other grains. The symptoms include a red rash.

⁶⁷³ *Rotbertr longespée*: This is an emendation of MS *lougha ípe*. *Morkinskinna* also

son of another Ríkarðr, and his father was Vilhjálmr, son of Gǫngu-Hrólfir (Walking-Hrólfir, Rollo). He won the dominion in France which was afterwards called Normandy, and was afterwards jarl over it, as were all his descendants. Jarl Gǫngu-Hrólfir was the son of Jarl Rognvaldr of Mœrir, brother of Jarl Þórir þegjandi (the Silent) and of Torf-Einarr of Orkney, and there was another son called Hrollaugr, as (Torf-)Einarr said when he had killed Haraldr hárfagri's son Hálfðan hálegggr (Long-leg), who had earlier killed his father:⁶⁷⁴

245. No spear from the hand of Hrólfir Orkn 12
 or Hrollaugr I see flying Hkr I 131
 at the crowd from the valleys;⁶⁷⁵
 we must avenge our father.
 [292] And this evening,
 as we create tumult,
 over the vat's stream⁶⁷⁶ silent
 sits Jarl Þórir at Mœrr.
246. I have carried out for Rognvaldr's killing Orkn 15
 my quarter-share of vengeance; Hkr I 132
 now the folk's support⁶⁷⁷ is fallen;
 so the fates decided.⁶⁷⁸
 Heap up,⁶⁷⁹ wise warriors,
 for we have won victory—
 hard tribute I have chosen
 for him—stones⁶⁸⁰ on Long-legs.⁶⁸¹

records this nickname for William's father, but in translation: *Vilhjalmr sonr Rotberts langspjóts* (Mork 284). In fact Duke Robert I of Normandy was nicknamed the Devil; the epithet 'Longsword' belonged to his great-grandfather William I of Normandy.

⁶⁷⁴ *Orkneyinga saga* (Orkn 12) recounts the killing of Rognvaldr by Hálfðan and his brother Guðriðr. The jarldom was given to Rognvaldr's other son by Haraldr hárfagri in compensation for his father's death. When Hálfðan attempted to appropriate Orkney he was killed by Torf-Einarr.

⁶⁷⁵ *dæla mengi*: 'crowd of valley-dwellers'. Some texts have *dólga mengi* 'crowd of enemies'. It has been suggested that *dælir* 'valley-dwellers' is a derogatory term for land-dwellers with little experience of the sea (Hkr I 131 n.).

⁶⁷⁶ *kerstraumr*: 'stream of the vessel', drink.

⁶⁷⁷ *folkstuðill*: 'prop of the people', king.

⁶⁷⁸ *ræðu því nomir*: corrected following other texts; *Fsk* has *roðo því nærer*.

⁶⁷⁹ *hlaði*: corrected following some MSS of other texts; *Fsk* has *byðe* (*hlýði*).

⁶⁸⁰ *hlaða grjóti at*: heap stones on, that is, bury.

⁶⁸¹ *Háfætr* 'Long-legged', a variation on the nickname *hálegggr*.

[293] 247. I will be glad always

Orkn 14

that, eager for war, men pierced
the king's young son with spears;
it suits a man to act bravely.
I don't hide the fact that the feeder
of the falcon of body-wounds⁶⁸²
will be angry—the corpse-hawk⁶⁸³ early
over isles flew to⁶⁸⁴ the injured.

CHAPTER 75

Vilhjálmr bastardr and Játvarðr inn helgi (St Edward), King of England, were first cousins. Jarl Rotbertr and Queen Emma were both children of Ríkarðr. Emma had previously been married to King Aðalráðr of England. Their sons were Játmundr (Edmund) and Játvarðr inn helgi. Later Emma was married to Knútr gamli. Their sons were Haraldr and Hqrða-Knútr.

Nineteen days after the fall of King Haraldr Sigurðarson, King Haraldr Goðinason and Vilhjálmr bastardr fought in the south of England.⁶⁸⁵ There fell King Haraldr, with his brother Jarl Gyrðr⁶⁸⁶ and the greater part of his force. Haraldr had then been king for nine and a half months.

Jarl Valbjófr Goðinason escaped by flight with his troop, and that same night the jarl was riding by an oak wood. Then Frenchmen rode against them and they fought, and the French fled into the wood, and the jarl at once had the wood set on fire and [294] more than a *hundred* men were burned to death there, and he took care that none escaped from the forest.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸² *holundavals gæli*: 'gladdener of the body-wound-falcon (raven)', warrior; Haraldr hárfagri.

⁶⁸³ *hræva valr*: 'falcon of corpses', raven.

⁶⁸⁴ *at*: corrected from some MSS of *Orkneyinga saga*; others like *Fsk* have *af*.

⁶⁸⁵ The battle of Hastings, which took place on 14th October; the battle of Stamford Bridge was on 25th September. *Fsk* corrects the statement of *Morkinskinna* (Mork 286) that the interval was twelve months.

⁶⁸⁶ Gyrð Godwineson was born about 1032 and became Earl of East Anglia, Cambridgeshire and Oxfordshire about 1055 (Barlow 1970, 163, 193). Leofwine, another brother of Harold, also died at Hastings.

⁶⁸⁷ There is no English or Norman record of Waltheof's presence at Hastings, nor of the incident narrated here. *Heimskringla* includes it, along with a verse said to belong to the *Valbjófsflokk* of Þorkell Skallason (see n. 684 below), which refers to the destruction of the French by fire. The story has been considered a reminis-

CHAPTER SEVENTY-SIX

Immediately after that, Vilhjálmr bastarðr was accepted as king in England. Soon afterwards Valþjófr went to see the king; he had already had a truce made with the king, and two knights rode with him. King Vilhjálmr received him well, and at their parting the king granted him a jarldom in Northumbria. He had previously been jarl over it, and when the jarl had accepted the deed and seal, he went away and came onto a certain heath. There came against him twelve fully armed⁶⁸⁸ knights and many squires. These knights King Vilhjálmr had sent after him to have him killed. The jarl leapt from his horse, for he had no armour. He drew his sword and defended himself for a while. But because there were many involved, the jarl was captured and one of the knights made ready to strike him. But when the jarl realised who was about to strike him, he completely forgave that knight, as well as the king and all the others who had come after him, and in witness of that he gave his silk tunic to the knight who was to strike him. Next he lay on the ground in the form of a cross and stretched both arms out, and then he was beheaded, and from his blood many people received cures, and Jarl Valþjófr is a true saint.⁶⁸⁹ Of these events Þorkell, son of Þórðr skalli (Bald-head), tells in detail. He was the follower of Jarl Valþjófr, and composed a poem after the jarl's death, and this is part of it:⁶⁹⁰

[295] 248. Certainly Vilhjálmr, stainer
of swords, who in the south
tore the icy sea, has betrayed
the trust of brave Valþjófr.⁶⁹¹

Hkr III 196

cence of Waltheof's rebellion against William in 1069, in concert with a Danish force, in which the Normans garrisoned in York were attacked with fire (see Introduction, pp. 25–26; Scott 1953–57).

⁶⁸⁸ At this point the text preserved on the first side of the surviving vellum fragment of *Fsk* (B) begins.

⁶⁸⁹ Anglo-Norman accounts give evidence of a popular cult surrounding Waldef particularly after his burial at Crowland Abbey, but their account of his execution on St Giles's Hill outside Winchester after some time in imprisonment does not resemble the *Fagrskinna* story in detail (Scott 1953–57, 80).

⁶⁹⁰ This evidence of a skaldic poet in the retinue of an English jarl (albeit one of Danish descent) is intriguing. Snorri names the poem as *Valþjófsflokkur* and gives the poet's name as Þorkell Skallason, but eliminates most of the hagiographic detail of Waltheof's death, which indeed is unparalleled in any surviving source.

⁶⁹¹ At this point the first fragment of *Fsk* (B) ends and the text of *Fsk* (A) is followed.

That same autumn King Haraldr Goðinason and four of his brothers lost their lives.

CHAPTER 77

After these five chieftains there was no more of Jarl Goðini's family left alive, as far as we can tell, apart from King Haraldr's daughter Gyða; while Jarl Tósti's son was Skúli konungsfóstri (King's Foster-father).⁶⁹² Gyða, King Haraldr's daughter, was married to King Valdamarr (Vladimir), son of King Jarizleifr (Jaroslav) of Hólmgarðr and of Ingigerðr, daughter of King Óláfr scenski. The son of Valdamarr and Gyða was King Haraldr, who married Kristín, daughter of King Ingi Steinkelsson. Their daughters were Málfríðr and Ingibjörg. Málfríðr was married first to King Sigurðr Jórsalafari (Jerusalem-traveller), and later to King Eiríkr eimuni (Ever-remembered) Eiríksson of Denmark. Ingibjörg Haraldsdóttir, Málfríðr's sister, was married to Knútr lávarðr (Lord), brother of Eiríkr eimuni. Their children were King Valdamarr and Kristín and Katerín and Margareta. King Valdamarr of the Danes married Suffia, daughter of King Valaðr of Poland and of Queen Rikiza. The children of King Valdamarr and Suffia were King Knútr and King Valdamarr and Queen Rikiza. Margareta, [296] daughter of Knútr lávarðr, was married to Stígr hvítaleðr (White-skin), father of Nikulás and Kristín, who was married to King Karl Sverkiðson.⁶⁹³ Their son was King Sverkir, father of King Jóan. King Karl's mother was Queen Úlfhildr, daughter of Hákon Finnsson, son of Hárekr of Þjótta. Úlfhildr was married first to King Nikulás of Denmark, and then to King Ingi Hallsteinsson of Sweden, and lastly to King Sverkir Kolsson. Queen Rikiza was married to King Eiríkr Knútsson in Sweden.

⁶⁹² *konungsfóstri*: the nickname could mean 'king's foster-father', 'foster-brother' or 'foster-son'; the first sense is implied by Skúli's role of advisor to King Óláfr kyrri. *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* agree in identifying Skúli as Tostig's son, but *Heimskringla* names him as the brother of Ketill krókr, who according to *Morkinskinna* was from Hálogaland (*Hkr* III 197, *Mork* 283–84).

⁶⁹³ King of Sweden.

CHAPTER 78

When Skúli konungsfóstri, son of Jarl Tósti, came to Norway, King Óláfr, who was called bóndi (the Farmer),⁶⁹⁴ gave him his kinswoman Guðrún, daughter of Nefsteinn, in marriage. Her mother was Ingiríðr, sister of Saint Óláfr and of King Haraldr and daughter of Sigurðr and of Ásta. Skúli konungsfóstri was the wisest and most eloquent of men. He presented all the king's business at assemblies and meetings, because King Óláfr was not an articulate man, and he was not as shrewd as his father had been, and so in many situations he submitted to the decisions of Skúli konungsfóstri. King Óláfr was so attached to Skúli that he offered to give him a whole *shire* in Norway, with all dues and revenues, and to assign it to him and his heirs. He answered in this manner, and said that he thought it not unlikely that if there was a change of ruler the arrangement would not hold, but said on the other hand that since he was constantly with the king, it would be more suitable for the king to assign him revenues near the market towns in which the king was accustomed to stay during the winters. Now the king told him to name the lands⁶⁹⁵ that he wanted to accept, and he did so, naming some east in Vík, some in Hqrdaland, and some in Þrándheimr, so that whatever town [297] the king was in Skúli had almost the best lands and ample rents for all the business and expenses in the towns.

CHAPTER 79

After the fall of King Haraldr Sigurðarson, King Sveinn of the Danes reckoned that the peace between Norwegians and Danes had come to an end, and that it had not been agreed for longer than while he and King Haraldr were both alive. Then levies were called out in both countries. King Óláfr Haraldsson brought out a full levy of ships and men in Norway, as Steinn says.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁴ Óláfr is also called *búandi* in *Agrip* (*Ágr* 39) but his more usual nickname was *kynri* 'the Quiet' (*Mork* 288).

⁶⁹⁵ At this point the text preserved on the second side of the surviving vellum fragment of *Fsk* (B) begins, and is followed to the end of the chapter. It breaks off some way into the interpolated genealogies which follow this chapter, and which are reproduced here as Appendix II. The translation follows the copied text of *Fsk* (B) from Chapter 79.

⁶⁹⁶ In *Heimskringla* the poem is named as *Óláfsdrápa*.

249. Keen in battle, the king
 in Kaupangr, where the blessed
 lord sleeps, will withhold from Sveinn
 his ancestral lands; he is mighty.
 Surely King Óláfr⁶⁹⁷ will assign
 to his descendants
 all of Norway; Úlfr's
 heir⁶⁹⁸ need not claim it.
- Óláfsdrápa* 10
Hkr III 202
Mork 286–87

Steinn also records that King Óláfr defended his land with *levies* and warships:

- [298] 250. The fine king defends the country—
 I recall the lord's glory—of Raumar⁶⁹⁹
 with cold swords and shields;
*Strong-minded, knows under [the sun] . . .*⁷⁰⁰
- Óláfsdrápa* 12
Mork 287

And this further:

251. The battle-eager lord of Egðir⁷⁰¹
 orders his band of blade-bold
 soldiers to fence with spears
 all the straits off his country.
 The country of the king of Filir⁷⁰²
 for increasers of swords' song⁷⁰³
 will be hard to harry;
himself much the greatest king . . .
- Óláfsdrápa* 7
Mork 287

Then King Óláfr sent King Sveinn a message of reconciliation; they arranged a meeting between themselves at Konungahella, as was the custom of kings.⁷⁰⁴ Then King Óláfr said to the king of the Danes that he wished [299] to keep to as much of a settlement as his father had made with the Danes, but not more; and otherwise he said it was likely that the Norwegians would again seek conflict with the

⁶⁹⁷ i.e. Saint Óláfr.

⁶⁹⁸ i.e. Sveinn Úlfsson, king of Denmark.

⁶⁹⁹ *Rauma grund*: 'land of Raumar (inhabitants of Römerike)', Norway.

⁷⁰⁰ See verse 237.

⁷⁰¹ *Egða stillir*: 'ruler of people of Agðir (Agder)', king of Norway.

⁷⁰² *Fila dróttinn*: 'lord of people of Fjalir (Fjaler)', Norway.

⁷⁰³ *sverða songherðandi*: 'promoter of the song of swords (battle)', warrior.

⁷⁰⁴ Konungahella was on the border between Norway and Sweden, at the mouth of the Götaälv (Gautelfr, Elfir); the meeting place of kings is also referred to by the name of the river (see above, pp. 170, 203).

Danes, and he said it was even more likely that the Danes would be able to remember that it was they who had asked for the settlement to which the Norwegians had agreed, and said that it was also likely that the Norwegians for their part would continue to create plenty of trouble for the Danes even though King Haraldr was gone. In this parley the kings made a settlement for a second time, and then King Sveinn betrothed his daughter Ingiríðr to King Óláfr. Steinn refers to the discussion in this way in his *drápa*:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>252. In all lands with great eloquence
 the edge-bold lord of Þrændir⁷⁰⁵
 wishes—that pleases people—
 peace to establish.
 Folk are glad that talk of friendship
 is enforced by the terrifier,
 obstinate, of the English.
 <i>Óláfr born [under] the sun.</i></p> | <p><i>Óláfsdrápa</i> 13
 <i>Hkr</i> III 203
 <i>Mork</i> 289</p> |
|--|--|

This peace between Danes and Norwegians lasted for a long time; then King Óláfr and all his men had a more peaceful and easy life than there had previously been in Norway. All the land flourished and grew plentiful, the people became prosperous and powerful. Then a town was founded in Norway which is one of the most glorious, and which was mentioned before, Niðaróss.⁷⁰⁶ The market town at Björgvin quickly grew large [300] and became a place of residence for wealthy men, and a large amount of trade came to it from other lands. At that time all the towns increased in size, and some were established for the first time. Then banquets and drinking houses began to be established in the towns much more than before. Then men wore wide trousers laced around the leg, and some wore gold rings clasped around their legs.

It was an ancient custom in Norway, Denmark and Sweden where there were king's residences and feasting halls, that there were doors at both ends of the room, and the king's high seat was in the middle of the long bench which faced towards the south. Then the

⁷⁰⁵ *Þrændi þengill*: 'lord of Þrændir (people of Trøndelag)', king of Norway.

⁷⁰⁶ There is some confusion in the text. According to *Morkinskinna*, 'A town was established in Norway that was the most magnificent of those that have been mentioned, except for the town of Niðaróss, and that town is called Björgvin [Bergen]' (*Mork* 289).

queen sat on the king's left side. That was called the *qndvegi*, and the most honourable seat for women and men was the one closest to the *qndvegi*, out on each side, and the least honourable was the one nearest the doorway. The noblest man, who was old and wise, was called the king's *ráðgjafi*, for at that time kings were accustomed to have wise old men in attendance in order to know of old customs and the examples set by their ancestors. This man was to sit on the other long bench opposite the king, and that was called the lower *qndvegi*. Women were on his right-hand side, and on his left side sat men. Then it was customary for chieftains to pass ale across the fire and for each to drink to the one facing him. It was considered the greatest honour to receive the king's toast. To show that this is no lie, Arnórr jarlaskáld tells how he sat with Jarl Þorfinnr:⁷⁰⁷

253. I always toasted, when each winter
we sat facing each other,
the raven's feeder;⁷⁰⁸ the ruler
drank ale to fine ships' crews.

Þorfinnsdrápa 1
Mork 290

[301] King Óláfr had a dais set up in his banqueting halls and then placed his high seat in the middle of the dais which ran across the end of the hall, and appointed cup-bearers and candle-bearers for himself, had a candle held in front of each noble person who sat at his table, and also had cup-bearers stand by with as many cups as there were noble people at his table. He also had *marshals*' seats established, and *marshals* and wise men sat on them. King Óláfr had with him a *hundred* (120) retainers, and the old law about this was that the king must have no more than sixty retainers. In addition he had sixty *gestir* where his father had had thirty, and another sixty men who were not retainers and were less honoured. They did errands for the king or his stewards, or went on trading trips, and were employed in all the king's business. And when *bændr* asked the king why he had a larger retinue than had previously existed, he answered in this fashion, and said that he was so much less effective

⁷⁰⁷ *Morkinskinna* also cites this verse as evidence of the custom of toasting, but without making it clear, as *Fagrskinna* does, that it refers to the court of Jarl Þorfinnr of Orkney: 'And to show that this is no lie, Arnórr says in his poetry . . .' (*Mork* 290).

⁷⁰⁸ *hrafnr verðgjafi*: 'giver of food to the raven', warrior.

than his father that he could not manage to control or govern the kingdom better with two *hundred* men than King Haraldr had with ninety or a *hundred*.

King Óláfr stayed for long periods in the east in Ranríki at a wealthy royal estate. He gave his sister Ingigerðr in marriage to Óláfr, son of King Sveinn of Denmark, who succeeded his brother Knútr (helgi) as king of Denmark.⁷⁰⁹ King Óláfr had a boy with his concubine Þóra, daughter of Árni lági (the Short). His name was Magnús and he was known as berfœttr (Bare-leg), but some called him Styrjaldar-Magnús (Battle-Magnús) before the finish. He was a very good-looking man and very tall, and there was a record made of the height of the three members of the line, King Haraldr, King Óláfr and Magnús berfœttr, on the church of Mary north in Kaupangr which King Haraldr had had built. The stone wall beside the door was marked with a cross where it was easiest for King Haraldr to kiss, a second where King Óláfr kissed, and the third was the lowest, but [302] all three were equally spaced. That one belonged to King Magnús. He was the most courtly of men.

King Óláfr became fatally ill at the place called Haukbœr, and his body was carried north to Niðaróss and buried at Christ Church. Twenty-seven years had then passed since the fall of his father King Haraldr.

CHAPTER 80

After the death of King Óláfr, Magnús Ólafsson was adopted as king east in Vík, but the Þrændir adopted as their king Hákon, son of Magnús (Haraldsson), who was the foster-son of Steigar-Þórir. He was very popular with the *bændr*. Hákon had travelled to Bjarmaland and fought there victoriously. In the same year that Magnús became king, he raided the Danes around Fjón and Sjáland and burned Viskardalr, and seized a large quantity of goods there.

King Hákon granted the Þrændir many kinds of improvements in their rights, and so they generally upheld his rule.⁷¹⁰ In the second

⁷⁰⁹ See *Knýtlinga saga* (*Knýt* 331–32). Knútr inn helgi reigned 1080–86; his brother Óláfr reigned 1086–95.

⁷¹⁰ In *Agrip* and *Morkinskinna* the improvement is described more specifically as the rescinding of *jólagjafir* ‘Christmas gifts’, taxes and land dues (*Agrip* 42, *Mork* 297).

year of the reigns of the kinsmen Magnús and Hákon, they were both north in Kaupangr for Christmas; King Magnús stayed in the royal palace, and King Hákon in Skúlagarðr, below St Clement's church. And next Magnús began to be uneasy in his mind because he ruled less of the country than his father had, and he planned to betray Hákon, and all winter he kept seven *longships* in water free of ice in Kaupangr. But in the spring near Candlemas (2nd February) he took his ships out at dead of night with lights under canopies, sailed to Hefring⁷¹¹ and stayed there overnight; he had large fires made on shore. And then Hákon and the troop who were in the town believed that this was done to betray [303] them, and he called out the troops with trumpets, and all the townspeople came forward and stayed assembled during the night.

And when it grew light in the morning, and King Magnús saw a great crowd on Eyrar (the sandbanks), he sailed out of the fjord and south to the Gulapingslög. Then King Hákon set out east by the inland route to Vík; first he held a meeting in Kaupangr, and sitting on horseback, he promised friendship to all and asked for the same in return, and said that he had misgivings about the intentions of his kinsman. And everyone willingly promised him friendship and support if he needed it, and the whole crowd followed him out to the foot of Steinbjörg. And then he had himself taken up onto the mountain; and one day he was following a ptarmigan, and he suddenly took sick and died there on the mountain. And after the space of two weeks his men came back to Kaupangr with the news that people were to go and retrieve King Hákon's body, and all the people did so, nearly all of them weeping, because everyone was very fond of him. And his body was laid to rest in Christ Church.

After the death of King Hákon, Steigar-Þórir could not reconcile himself to King Magnús, who took over power, but instead promoted the man called Sveinn; he was the son of Haraldr flettr (Plunderer).⁷¹² Involved in this plan with Þórir were Egill Áskelsson and Skjálgr of Jaðarr. So says Þorkell hamarskáld:⁷¹³

254. Þórir, with great ideas, gathered
together his troops with Egill—

Magnúsdrápa 1
Hkr III 214

⁷¹¹ Høvingen, a headland close to Trondheim.

⁷¹² Sveinn is said in *Heimskringla* to be a Danish man of high birth (*Hkr* III 213).

⁷¹³ The poem is named in *Heimskringla* as *Magnúsdrápa* (*Hkr* III 214).

these plans were⁷¹⁴ rather popular
with people—from far and wide.

Mork 299

I have heard that heavy
harm came to Skjálgr's friends
when too large a stone *landed men*
lobbed⁷¹⁵ at the death-falcon's waterer.⁷¹⁶

[304] They raised troops from Upplönd and came down into Raumsdalr and to Sunnmœrr, and acquired ships there and sailed north to Þrándheimr. And when Sigurðr ullstreng (Wool-string) and other friends of the king heard of this, they summoned with the despatch of an arrow-message all the troops they could, and made for Vigg. And Sveinn and Þórir also led their troops there and fought against Sigurðr's force, and they succeeded in boarding his ships and got the upper hand, causing great loss of life, and Sigurðr fled to see King Magnús. And Sveinn and Þórir moved to Kaupangr and hovered around in the fjord there. And when they were about to leave the fjord and had headed their ships for Hefring, King Magnús came into the fjord, and Þórir and his men put their ships in at Vagnvíkar and fled from the ships, and came down into the valley which is called Þexdalr to Seljuhverfi, and Þórir was being carried in a litter over the mountain then;⁷¹⁷ then they got ships together and went to Hálogaland. And the king went after them and saw a troop moving on the fjord called Harmr. Þórir and Sveinn headed their ships for Esjutún, thinking it was on the mainland; but it was an island. Then many were taken captive, and Þórir and Egill were also captured on the island called Vambarhólmr, and Egill did not want to flee from his wife, Ingibjörg Qgmundardóttir, sister of Skopti.

When Steigar-Þórir was captured, Sigurðr ullstreng said to him: 'Are you well, Steigar-Þórir?'

He answered, 'Sound of arm, slow of foot.'⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁴ *vǫru*: In *Hkr* and *Mork* this periphrasis is given the opposite sense by the negative form *vǫrut*.

⁷¹⁵ *verpa steini of afl sér*, 'throw a stone beyond one's strength', bite off more than one can chew.

⁷¹⁶ *morðvals brynnir*: 'giver of drink to the battle-falcon (raven)', warrior; here, King Magnús.

⁷¹⁷ according to *Morkinskinna*, 'because old age had made him very slow at the time of these events' (*Mork* 302).

⁷¹⁸ *Heill at hǫndum, hrumr at fótum*: *Morkinskinna* includes an anonymous verse incorporating the question and this alliterative response (*Mork* 303).

Then a gallows was raised, and Þórir saw that all his men had now run away, while death must be intended for him. Then Þórir said, and grinned:

[305] 255. We were four fellows
before; one was steering.

Hkr III 216
Mork 304

Then many angry words were spoken against Þórir by people he had previously caused loss to; he had destroyed the houses of some, robbed some or burned their property, killed their relatives or friends. People say that Víðkunnr Jóansson said as Þórir was led to the gallows, and strayed from the path because his legs were stiff:

‘More to starboard, Þórir, more to port!’

And Víðkunnr said this because Þórir had burned his farm on Bjarkey and a fine ship that he owned, and Þórir had said as the ship blazed:

‘Hold more to starboard, Víðkunnr, now more to port!’

Then Víðkunnr and his father Jóan had fled, as is said here:

256. There burns in the middle of Bjarkey
the best dwelling I know.
The grief—from Þórir no good
is gained—of the stick⁷¹⁹ is roaring.
Towards evening Jóan need not protest
too little fire or plundering;
bright flame sears the wide estate;
smoke to the clouds rises.

Hkr III 215
Mork 304

As Þórir was led to the gallows he said, ‘Bad schemes turn out badly.’ And when the gallows-beam rose up,⁷²⁰ Þórir was so heavy that [306] his body tore apart at the neck. And next Egill was led under the gallows, and the king’s servants were to hang him. Then Egill said:

‘Just because you are hanging me, it doesn’t mean that every one of you doesn’t deserve it more.’

So says the poet:⁷²¹

⁷¹⁹ *vandar bql*: ‘grief, harm of the stick’, fire.

⁷²⁰ *gálgatréit*: a cross-beam attached to the top of the gallows was used as a lever or pivot. The noose was attached to one end and the victim raised up by pulling down the other end.

⁷²¹ In *Morkinskinna* the verse is attributed to Þorkell hamarskáld.

257. I am told that to Egill's tongue
 a truthful word came for
 the king's servants, stripped,
 Sól of wave's daylight,⁷²² of honesty;
 he said they were all far more fit
 for hanging higher than he was;
 the destroyer of battle-light⁷²³ suffered
 too serious a sorrow.

Hkr III 217
Mork 305

King Magnús sat by while they were hanged, and was so angry that none of his men dared to ask for a reprieve for Þórir or Egill. And when Egill was kicking on the gallows, the king said:

‘Your good kinsmen are of little use to you.’

From that it was seen that he had wished that he had been asked to spare Egill's life.

But Sveinn headed out to sea and to Denmark, into the protection of King Nikulás, and he stayed there until he was reconciled with King Eysteinn, son of King Magnús, and he became King Eysteinn's cupbearer and grew dear to the king.

After that King Magnús ruled the kingdom alone until his death. He became a powerful and severe ruler, both within the country and especially abroad.

CHAPTER 81

[307] Some years later King Magnús set out on a journey abroad, and took with him many *landed men* and a large troop and went overseas to the west,⁷²⁴ first to Orkney, and seized there the jarls Magnús and Erlingr, sons of Jarl Erlendr, and took them with him. Then he took his troop to the Hebrides and put in at Lewis, raided there and seized the island and all control of it. From there he went to Skye and made a raid on the coast, carrying off a large amount of property and taking whatever he demanded from the land. Then he went through the outer islands, Tiree and North Uist, until he

⁷²² *unmar dags Sól*: ‘Sól (goddess) of the brightness of the wave (gold)’, woman addressed by the poet; see Frank 1988.

⁷²³ *hjaldrblik's eyðir*: ‘destroyer of the light of battle-noise (sword)’, warrior.

⁷²⁴ On Magnús's two expeditions to the west, see Power 1986. The first expedition took place in 1098–99.

came to Iona, went ashore there and into the town, and gave assurances of peace for each man's property there. People say that he had the small church of St Columba opened, and went in,⁷²⁵ and said that no man must be so bold as to go into the church. Then that church was locked so that its door has never been opened since.

Then he sailed in with his army to the middle of the region and burned it extensively. And when King Magnús had won all the Northern Hebrides, he took his force out to Islay, and burned and destroyed a great deal there before he was given power over it. Lögmaðr, son of King Guðrøðr, who had formerly ruled the Northern Hebrides, fled away to the south and out to sea and met no resistance, but before he came to a halt King Magnús captured him with his crew. After that he sailed his fleet south by Kintyre and raided on both sides, on the shore of Scotland and west in Ireland, and did many great deeds in both countries. Then he sailed south to Man with his troop, captured it and took possession of all the islands that were there.

After that he took his troop south to Wales and sailed into the Menai Strait, and raided there on both shores, on the coast of Wales and out on Anglesey. There a great army came against him, commanded by two jarls; one was called Hugi digri (the Fat), the other Hugi [308] prúði (the Splendid).⁷²⁶ A long and hard battle took place, and it finished in a way that has become famous, for Hugi prúði was shot with an arrow that went through the eye and out at the back of the neck, and that has been called a lucky shot for the man who shot it, because no other part of him was uncovered, and most people attribute that shot to King Magnús. A man from Hálogaland was standing next to the king and they both shot at the same time, and the shot must have come from one of the two; but Hamarskáld indicates that it came from the king, as is said here:

258. The spike on armour sounded;
the sovereign shot mightily.
The Egðir's king⁷²⁷ bent the bow;

Magnúsdrápa 3
Hkr III 223
Mork 319

⁷²⁵ According to *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* the king did *not* enter the church (*Mork* 317, *Hkr* III 220).

⁷²⁶ These Norman lords, Hugo of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury and Arundel (Hugi prúði) and Hugo of Avranches, Earl of Chester (Hugi digri) had some success in subduing North Wales in 1098, until the appearance of Magnús's fleet (*Loyn* 1977, 105).

⁷²⁷ *Egða allvaldr*: 'king of the people of Agðir', king of Norway.

blood spurted on helmets.
 The string's hail⁷²⁸ rushed at ring-mail;
 the ranks fell, and the Hqrðar's
 king⁷²⁹ in fierce land-combat
 caused the jarl to be slain.

Órkn 96

The second arrow struck the nose-guard of the helmet and stuck there. For that reason there is some disagreement about which was the king's shot, since they stood close together and both shots were fired at the same time. After the fall of Hugl prúði, Hugl digri and all the rest of the Welsh fled.

After this battle King Magnús had possession of Anglesey, which is considered a third of the realm of Wales. Then he turned back by the southerly and easterly route.⁷³⁰ Then messages of reconciliation came from the king of the Scots, [309] proposing that if he did not raid in his kingdom the king would give him as his share all the islands that were so far off Scotland that he could pass in a ship with a steering-oar attached to it between them and the mainland. Then King Magnús appointed his own men to govern them and laid a tribute on this domain, and when he turned back northwards he sailed towards the isthmus of Kintyre⁷³¹ and had a small boat dragged over it, and he himself sat by the steering-oar on the *after-deck*, and when the boat was hauled over to the sea on the northern side he laid claim to the whole of Kintyre, and said that he had travelled in a ship with a steering-oar attached to it between it and Scotland; then he had the fleet sail outside the Mull of Kintyre, and so took possession of Kintyre, and that is a large piece of land. But there is one neck of land narrow enough to cross, and ships are often dragged over it. Kintyre is considered a better land than the best island in the Hebrides.

After that King Magnús travelled north through the islands, turning between them and the Scottish coast, and so took possession of all the outer islands. His men went into every fjord and to all the islands within the fjords and subjected everything to King Magnús by sailing ships between the mainland and the islands, whether they

⁷²⁸ *strengs hagl*: 'hail of the (bow)string', arrows.

⁷²⁹ *Hqrða gramr*: 'king of the Hordalanders', king of Norway.

⁷³⁰ Around the south of England.

⁷³¹ At Loch Tarbert.

were inhabited or not. He stayed in Suðrey⁷³² during the winter, but the following summer he went back to Norway, leaving behind in Orkney Erlingr, son of Jarl Erlendr; but Erlingr's brother Magnús had run away from King Magnús to the king of the Scots the summer before.

While King Magnús was in Orkney, King Melkólmr (Malcolm) of the Scots sent his daughter out to Orkney. She was given in marriage by King Magnús to his son Sigurðr, who was then nine years old, and the girl was five. Then Magnús appointed Sigurðr as ruler over all the islands, both the Hebrides and Orkney, and gave him the title of king and put him in the charge of his kinsman Hákon Pálsson, and of Erlingr, with the support of the king of the Scots. By this means reconciliation and friendship was confirmed between [310] King Magnús and the king of the Scots. King Melkólmr was the father of David, who was king of Scotland later.

CHAPTER 82

Then King Magnús went to Norway, and stayed the following winter east in the Vík with a large number of people, then set off to ride up into the western part of Gautland and take control of it; he had raided a great deal, and the people of Vestr-Gautland all submitted to him in the northerly regions, and before he rode east around the lake to the main district he asked his friends for advice, and it seemed to them that they had too few troops to go to the mainland. He appointed some of his troop to stay behind there and guard the territory he had gained from the Swedish king's dominion, and the leaders among them were Finn Skoptason and Sigurðr ullstreng, and they built themselves earthworks before King Magnús went to Norway.

Then the Norwegians heard that King Ingi of the Swedes must be gathering forces together and intending to ride against them, and that seemed to them ridiculous, since they had established themselves securely and were not afraid of a Gautish army, and when the king's expedition was delayed, they recited this:

⁷³² *Suðrey*: 'south island', South Uist? Both *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 321) and *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 224) say that Magnús spent the winter *i Suðreyjum* 'in the Hebrides'.

259. Too late in attacking
is Ingi fat-buttocks.

Hkr 226
Mork 328

Soon afterwards King Ingi rode down against the Norwegians with an overwhelming army, and having no other choice, they gave themselves up into King Ingi's power. He allowed them their lives, weapons, clothes and horses, but confiscated all the other goods they had taken. Then they went north to find King Magnús.

On another occasion King Magnús went east to Gautland with a great force, and [311] raided and burned extensively. Then an army of Gautar came against him east to Foxerni.⁷³³ Then King Magnús returned with his army, and had already done them great harm in Gautland through plundering and killings and burning of land. He too had lost many men before it was over.

CHAPTER 83

After this messages of reconciliation passed from the kings of the Danes and the Swedes to King Magnús, proposing to establish peace between the countries, and asking him not to covet their kingdoms. After that a meeting of the kings was arranged at the borderland on the Elfr. Then King Magnús came from the north, and Eiríkr, king of the Danes,⁷³⁴ from the south, and King Ingi Steinkelsson⁷³⁵ down from Gautland, and it is said that, great as were the issues and the hostility on which these rulers had come together, it turned out in a short time that these three kings held discussions and reached agreement, and it took less than half a meal-time before they were all reconciled and all the kingdoms at peace, and each of them was to keep the land ruled by his forefathers intact, and each of the rulers was to compensate his own countrymen for what he himself had destroyed, and the kings were to reckon themselves equal after that.

When these three kings stood all together on one level, their followers said that it would not be possible to find three other braver-looking men. King Ingi was the oldest of them, and the biggest,

⁷³³ *Foxerni*: the name is supplied from *Heimskringla* and *Morkinskinna*. *Fagrskinna* has *austan af oxinne* (B), *austr á oxinne* (A).

⁷³⁴ Eiríkr cimuni Eiríksson, king of Denmark 1134–37.

⁷³⁵ Ingi Steinkelsson ruled Sweden c. 1080–1110.

both in height and girth. And King Eiríkr had the fairest face of them all. King Magnús was the most warlike and toughest, and yet they were all tall and manly men.

Then King Ingi betrothed his daughter Margareta to King Magnús [312], and her dowry was those territories and districts which they had been fighting over before. Then Margareta was called *friðkolla* (Peace-Maiden). This settlement was made after the pattern of that which had been made between King Óláfr⁷³⁶ and the king of the Swedes.

CHAPTER 84

When King Magnús had ruled Norway for nine years, he set out west over the sea for a second time, and he took a following both large and fair. Then there went with him all the most powerful men in the country: Sigurðr Hranason, Víðkunnr Jóansson, Dagr Eilífsson, Serkr of Sogn, Eyvindr qlbogi (Elbow), the king's *marshal*, and many other important men. He went first west to Orkney and took with him from there Erlingr, son of Jarl Erlendr, and some men with him. Then he sailed to the Hebrides and from there west to Ireland, went ashore in Ireland and raided, fought many battles and always won. Then he sailed south to Dublin and took it in the autumn and appointed his men to guard it. But the king himself went in to Connaught and stayed there for much of the winter with King Mýrkjartak (Muirchertach),⁷³⁷ and King Magnús was there on peaceful terms. Then he travelled extensively through Ulster and raided there, and had conquered a large part of the country and taken hostages. Then he made ready in the summer to go back to Norway; he established his hostages and guardians in Dublin, and he raided extensively around Ulster and then intended to sail north to Orkney.

King Magnús considered that he needed to requisition provisions before he sailed north, and the king was to send them to him from Connaught, and he waited for a while; and they were delayed and did not come. Then he sent his men again for them, and these men were slower than he expected. Then King Magnús went ashore with

⁷³⁶ i.e. Óláfr inn helgi, as *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 329) specifies (see p. 144 above).

⁷³⁷ King Muirchertach Ua Briain (Power 1986).

the greater part of his army, meaning to look for his men and [313] provisions. And when the king found his men, he saw that they were bringing him provisions, and then he turned his troop back, and they went through some thickets, and there were bogs and deep fens with stepping-stones across them. Then an Irish army had gathered in front of him and had almost got between them and the ships. Then a great battle took place, and such a great host came to swell the Irish forces that although some were killed, there came to be twice as many as there had been in the first place, and then the tally of the slain turned against the Norwegians, and some fled.

CHAPTER 85

King Magnús would not flee, and he kept his troop and shield-wall in place in front of his standard, and intended that the men of Upplönd, who were the first to cross the bog, should shoot with their bows, but instead they cast their shields over their backs and ran for the ships. And as King Magnús's troop fled from him he spoke this verse:⁷³⁸

260. Why harp on the way homeward? *Mork* 334
 My heart is in Dublin,
 and I will not come this autumn
 east to the women of Kaupangr.
 [I am content, for pleasure-meetings
 the maiden⁷³⁹ does not refuse;]⁷⁴⁰
 youth is the cause; the Irish woman
 I love more than myself.

[314] Then King Magnús called to Þorgrímr húfa (Cap) and said:
 'I was not a wise man on the day that I outlawed Sigurðr hundr
 (Hound),⁷⁴¹ and yet it was even less wise to have made you a *landed*

⁷³⁸ This verse and the introductory sentence is preserved in *Fagrskinna* only in an annotation written in the margin of one copy (A2) by the seventeenth-century antiquarian Árni Magnússon, who may have copied it from the now-lost vellum manuscript. If so, it is not clear whether it was a marginal addition or incorporated in the text of the vellum.

⁷³⁹ *ingian*: the Irish word *inghean*.

⁷⁴⁰ Lines 5–6 follow the text of *Morkinskinna*, since *Fagrskinna* is corrupt at this point.

⁷⁴¹ Brother of Viðkunnr Jóansson (p. 302). The reference to his outlawing is not explained.

man; you are parting from me dishonourably, as one would expect, and Sigurðr hundr would not have left me that way.'

After that all who were standing further back fled, as well as those who had got across the bog. But the king himself stood at the front of the army and fought heroically and always believed that it would turn out well, because for a long time the Norwegians cut down the Irish like cattle; but always as soon as one was cut down, two came down from the countryside in his place, and when the group around the standard thinned, the king got a thrust from a spear through both his legs. Then he broke the shaft by putting his hand down between his legs and pushing, and he said:

'So we break all the spear-legs,' and then he called out to his troop, told them to fight well and said he had not come to much harm.

King Magnús was easily recognised: he wore a gilded helmet with a lion depicted on it in gold. His sword was called Leggbítr (Leg-biter); its hand-guards, cross-bar and pommel were of walrus ivory with gold wound around the haft, and it was the sharpest of all swords. He had pulled on a red sleeveless silk coat over his tunic, and everyone said that a more warlike man with so many weapons, or more manly or noble-looking, had never been seen. Then Magnús suffered a blow on the neck between the shoulders from an Irish axe. That was his death-blow, and then King Magnús fell. Víðkunnr Jóansson cut in two the man who had struck him, and took King Magnús's sword Leggbítr, but his shield was useless by then.

After that they all fled. Víðkunnr Jóansson [315] himself said that when he and Sigurðr Hranason were running, those who were left behind would not be able to bring word of what happened. There fell Erlingr, son of Jarl Erlendr, and many important men and a large number of others, and those who got to the ships headed away from land and so turned north to Orkney to meet King Sigurðr, King Magnús's son, and took him east to Norway with them in the autumn.

After the fall of King Magnús, his three sons Sigurðr, Eysteinn and Óláfr were adopted as kings. Sigurðr left behind in the west the daughter of the king of the Scots, and now did not want to marry her. King Sigurðr had the eastern part of the country, Eysteinn the northern, and they both took care of the share of their brother Óláfr, since he was no more than three years old when he was adopted as king. King Sigurðr was fourteen years old then and Eysteinn

sixteen. The mother of King Óláfr was Sigríðr, daughter of Saxi of Vík.

CHAPTER 86

When these three kings had been ruling the country for three years, King Sigurðr had prepared for a voyage abroad at great expense. With him went many *landed men* and many important *bændr*. He had sixty ships altogether, and they were not ready early in the summer. King Sigurðr sailed from Norway in the autumn and west to England, and arrived there with all his troop. King Heinrekr (Henry) of England,⁷⁴² son of Vilhjálmr bastardr, welcomed him. King Sigurðr stayed in England for the winter, but the following spring he set out for France, and went west all the way until he came to Galicia. He stayed there for the second winter. Then he fell out with a certain jarl, and their exchanges reached the point where in the autumn the jarl broke the peace they had made between them, and King Sigurðr killed many of the jarl's men, and the jarl [316] barely escaped. King Sigurðr acquired a large amount of property there, some as booty, and some as ransom for the men he had captured in battle. The following spring he set out for Spain, and when he came to the city which is called Lisbon, he besieged it with his army and fought a battle there and seized a great deal of property there. From there King Sigurðr went out to the heathen part of Spain. Then he went ashore with all his troops and fought another battle and was victorious.

It happened soon afterwards that one day there came against King Sigurðr and his troop many pirate *galleys*, which attacked and fought against them. There was great loss of life there, almost all of it among the heathens. Then King Sigurðr captured eight *galleys* and killed every mother's son on them.

King Sigurðr fought a fourth battle against a certain fort called Alkasse. He won the⁷⁴³ fort and took a great deal of property.

⁷⁴² Henry I (1100–35). William of Malmesbury confirms that Sigurðr got permission from Henry to spend the winter in England, but it is not clear in which year, or whether he met the king (William of Malmesbury II, 485–86).

⁷⁴³ Here there is a lacuna in *Fsk* (B). *Fsk* (A) is followed from this point until it too breaks off in chapter 91; after this both versions are lacking until *Fsk* (B) resumes.

When King Sigurðr now sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar, there came against him a host of heathens, and there he fought his fifth battle and was victorious. Some time later King Sigurðr came to the place called Formentera. There they found a certain cave in a crag, and many people had taken up their position there, both black men and Saracens. It was a great fortress, because it was high and the approach to it was steep, and there was a stone wall across the mouth of the cave. They exchanged shots for a while, and the king realised that they would achieve nothing as things were. Then the king had certain boats called *barkar* brought, and had strong cables tied around prow and stern; then he had the boats hauled up onto the crag above the mouth of the cave, and men got into the boats with their weapons and loaded them with stones, and then they lowered the boats over the side of the crag. And those who were in the boats [317] threw down both weapons and stones on the heathen men, and the heathens fell back from the stone walls. Then King Sigurðr went up to the cave and got up on the stone wall. So says Halldórr skvaldri (Babbler).⁷⁴⁴

261. Barks the strengthener of battle⁷⁴⁵
 bade men lower—the ruler's
 fights with Saracens grew famous—
 before the ogress's short-cut;⁷⁴⁶
 where up⁷⁴⁷ the cliff to the cavern
 crowded with men, the *din-Þrótt*,
 keen in strife, of *Göndul*'s assembly⁷⁴⁸
 proceeded with his company.

Útfarardrápa 7
Hkr III 245–46
Mork 347

Then the heathens made their way further into the cave to the defensive position they had made for themselves there. But King Sigurðr had big logs carried up into the cave, and they built a big bonfire⁷⁴⁹ and set fire to it. The fire grew so large that that all the heathen men were burned there, except those who succumbed to the weapons of the Christians. That has been called a most glorious feat.

⁷⁴⁴ *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 341) refers to a poem by Halldórr skvaldri (now called *Útfarardrápa*), of which it cites a number of verses, as authority for Sigurðr's journey.

⁷⁴⁵ *bøðstýrkir*: 'strengthener of battle', warrior.

⁷⁴⁶ *gígjar gagnstigr*: 'short-cut of the giantess', side of a crag.

⁷⁴⁷ *neðan* is a correction for MSS *þeðan*.

⁷⁴⁸ *Göndlar þings gny-Þrótt*: 'clash-Þrótt (Óðinn) of Göndull's (valkyrie's) meeting (battle)', warrior. *Þrótt* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *drott*.

⁷⁴⁹ *bál*: pyre; *Fsk* (ÍF XXIX) has the misprint *bát*.

CHAPTER 87

Now King Sigurðr went south to Sicily, and the ruler of it then was Jarl Rogeirr (Roger).⁷⁵⁰ King Sigurðr stayed over the winter there with the jarl, and on the eighth day of Christmas [318] King Sigurðr led Jarl Rogeirr to the high seat with himself and gave him the title of king. King Rogeirr ruled the kingdom for a long time after that and increased his domains in many respects. His son was King Vilhjálmr of Sicily. King Vilhjálmr had three daughters; one of them was married to the emperor Heinrekr, and the second daughter of King Vilhjálmr was married to the jarl of Cyprus. His third daughter was married to Margariz kussari (the Corsair Berengar Margarito).⁷⁵¹

CHAPTER 88

King Sigurðr then went out across the sea and steered his ships to Acre; he went from there by land out to Jerusalem, and there met Baldvini (Baldwin), who was king of Palestine then.⁷⁵² King Sigurðr was hospitably entertained there, and King Baldvini himself accompanied him out to the river Jordan and back to Jerusalem. King Baldvini, with the agreement of the Patriarch, gave King Sigurðr a piece of the Holy Cross and many other holy relics.

CHAPTER 89

At that same time, King Baldvini went with his army to the town in Syria which is called Sætt. King Sigurðr also went with the king to that same town with his army, and on that expedition King Baldvini and King Sigurðr won the town.⁷⁵³ But King Sigurðr at

⁷⁵⁰ Roger II, count of Sicily 1105–1130 and its first king 1130–54. Sigurðr's visit, if historical, probably took place in 1110 (Houben 2002, 27).

⁷⁵¹ Roger's son was William I of Sicily, who in turn had two sons, William II and Henry, but no daughters; William II was childless. It was Constance, sister of William I, who was married to the emperor Henry, son of Frederick Barbarossa. Berengar Margarito commanded the fleet of William II; he was captured and finally killed by Henry II in 1200 (*Hkr* II 248 n. 5).

⁷⁵² Baldwin I, King of Jerusalem 1100–18; brother of Godfrey Bouillon whom he accompanied on the First Crusade.

⁷⁵³ Sigurðr is believed to have assisted Baldwin I at the siege of Sidon, which he won in 1110, after an unsuccessful assault in 1108 (Setton 1969, 386–87).

once gave the town to King Baldvini, and Baldvini appointed Christian men to take charge of the town. So says Halldórr skvaldri:

- [319] 262. With force the wound-bitch's feeder⁷⁵⁴ *Útfarardrápa* 11
 defeated the pagans' city— *Mork (Frissbók* 286)
 each battle was nobly fought—yet you *Hkr* III 251
 yielded it generously.

CHAPTER 90

Then Sigurðr went back to Acre; there they embarked on their ships and left the land, and then King Sigurðr went with his troop to Miklagarðr, and before he sailed up into the strait he lay for two weeks despite a brisk favourable wind, for he wanted to sail when his sails were trimmed fore and aft on the ships, because then all his sails could be seen from the land on either side, for they were all made of costly cloth. And when he sailed to Miklagarðr the Emperor Alexius had the gate called Gullvarta (the Golden Gate) opened.⁷⁵⁵ Then King Sigurðr walked into the city, and all the streets before him were lined with costly cloth. King Sigurðr told his men that they must seem to think nothing of it even if they saw things that were not often seen in northern lands, and so they did, walking on the costly cloths as if the street were bare. Emperor Alexius welcomed King Sigurðr warmly and lodged him and his troop in splendid palaces.

CHAPTER 91

Now Emperor Alexius offered King Sigurðr the choice whether he wanted preparations to be made for the contest which is called *paðveims leikr*, or whether he would rather accept from him the amount of gold that [320] the games cost, and that was six ship-pounds of gold.⁷⁵⁶ King Sigurðr chose the contest, which greatly pleased the

⁷⁵⁴ *benja tíkr bræðir*: 'feeder of the bitch of wounds (she-wolf)', warrior.

⁷⁵⁵ The Golden Gate, a triumphal arch erected in the fourth century and later incorporated into the Land Walls, through which victorious emperors rode on their return from campaigns.

⁷⁵⁶ See note 607.

emperor, and now he had preparations made for the contest, and that contest had rarely been seen or performed before. There was a great crowd of the Norwegians who attended . . .⁷⁵⁷

CHAPTER 92

. . . been built in Norway. He also had the fortress built at Agðanes and a church north in Vágar, and donated property to it. King Eysteinn also had a ship built in Niðaróss in the style of Ormr inn langi. He had dragon's heads made on it and decorated with gold, and called it Dreki (Dragon). King Eysteinn was the first king of Norway to bring Jamtaland under his rule.

CHAPTER 93

In the thirteenth year of the reign of the brothers King Sigurðr and King Eysteinn, their brother King Óláfr fell ill and died. His body was buried at Christ Church in Niðaróss, and seven years later King Eysteinn took ill and died in the south at Stimr at Hústaðir.⁷⁵⁸ Afterwards his body was taken north to Niðaróss and buried at Christ Church. His death was mourned by everyone in Norway. And then King Sigurðr ruled the land alone.

A few years after the death of King Eysteinn, a man called Haraldr came east from [321] Ireland and claimed to be the son of Magnús berfœttr.⁷⁵⁹ He had been called Gillikrist (gilla-crist, 'Christ's servant') in Ireland. And when Haraldr came to King Sigurðr and put his case before him and asked if he could undergo an ordeal to prove

⁷⁵⁷ At this point there is a lacuna in *Fsk* (A) (the MS AM 303 4to leaves four pages blank). *Fsk* (B) is also missing here (see note 743 above). The content can be deduced from the corresponding portion of *Morkinskinna*, which has an account of the games; a description of the hippodrome; Sigurðr giving a feast for the Emperor; Sigurðr returning to Norway. At the point where the text (*Fsk* (B)) resumes, the narrative has moved on to Sigurðr's brother King Eysteinn and the churches and other constructions he has built in Sigurðr's absence. Theodoricus (Theodoricus 1998, 51) also gives details of Eysteinn's construction projects.

⁷⁵⁸ So *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 262), but according to *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 387) he died at Askstaðir, possibly an error for Hústaðir.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ágrip* (*Ágr* 50) also has Haraldr coming from Ireland, Theodoricus (Theodoricus 1998, 53) *de Scotia* 'from Scotland', *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 391) from the Hebrides.

his paternity, Sigurðr laid the matter before his friends, and there was lengthy discussion before it was agreed that Haraldr must tread hot iron and so prove his paternity. And that was seven red-hot ploughshares. And there Haraldr walked over it with bare feet, and two bishops led him, and this is the most severe ordeal that has been undergone in Norway. Haraldr passed the test and showed his unburned feet to King Sigurðr and all those who were present.⁷⁶⁰ King Sigurðr then accepted Haraldr's kinship with a good grace, and kept him with him among his retinue and treated him well. King Sigurðr's son Magnús resented Haraldr and many others took Magnús's side in the matter. Magnús, King Sigurðr's son, married Kristín, daughter of Knútr lávarðr and of Ingibjörg, daughter of King Haraldr, and sister of Queen Málfríðr, who was married to his father King Sigurðr.

When King Sigurðr was living east in Vík, he took sick and died, and indeed his health had been failing for a long time before that. King Sigurðr's body was taken to Ósló, and he rests in the Church of St Hallvarðr⁷⁶¹ in the stone wall on the south side outside the choir. King Sigurðr had then ruled Norway for twenty-seven years since the death of his father, King Magnús berfœttr.

CHAPTER 94

After the death of King Sigurðr, Magnús, son of King Sigurðr, and Haraldr Magnússon, brother of King Sigurðr, were accepted as kings, and each of them had his own court [322], and they had not been kings together for long before dissension set in between them, and it became so serious that each of them destroyed estates belonging to the other, and next they were killing each other's men for it.

In the fourth year of their reign King Haraldr was on the eastern side of Vík and gathering forces. King Magnús mustered a large army and went against his kinsman King Haraldr. They met at the

⁷⁶⁰ On trial by ordeal see note 215 above.

⁷⁶¹ *Hallvarðskirkja*: St Hallvarðr was patron saint of the people of Vík and Upplönd. He was the son of Vébjörn, a cousin of St Óláfr, and was killed in 1043 while saving a pregnant woman who was being pursued by assailants. He was killed and his corpse weighed down in the sea with a millstone, but both body and millstone rose miraculously to the surface. His relics were transferred to the cathedral in Oslo when it was built in 1130 (Gjerløw 1956–78, 63–66).

place called Fyrirleif. King Magnús had a much larger troop. There they fought and many men fell. There fell Kristrøðr, King Haraldr's half-brother, and no fewer than sixty of his retainers. But King Haraldr himself escaped by flight. King Haraldr fled south to Denmark to see King Eiríkr Eiríksson of the Danes. They had earlier become sworn brothers. King Eiríkr gave King Haraldr the whole of Halland for visitation and gave him six *longships* without tackle.

After the Battle of Fyrirleif King Magnús took control of the whole of Norway, and went north to Björgvin in the autumn, and then most of the *landed men* went home to their estates.

That same autumn King Haraldr came north from Denmark, and when he got to Konungahella there was a certain amount of mustering against him, and yet no battle took place because the *bændr* surrendered and accepted King Haraldr. Then King Haraldr set out north through Vík and killed many men, but from some he took a large amount of property.

Then King Haraldr got himself ships and a great army thronged to him, and when he came east of Borg he captured the brothers Neriðr and Ásbjörn, told them to choose which of them wanted to be hanged and which to go into Sarp. Neriðr was hanged, Ásbjörn went into Sarp. He was the elder, and that death seemed the [323] more cruel. Then King Haraldr travelled north along the coast and took control of the whole country as he went.

When King Magnús heard this news he sent summonses for his *landed men* and called out the *levy*. But most *landed men* stayed at home, and few came to him from the settlements. Then he summoned Sigurðr, son of Sigurðr Nefsteinsson, to him. He was a great leader, and wiser than any other man. And King Magnús asked him to advise how to deal with it. He answered in this way:

'Lord,' he said, 'I know a good plan for this, if you are willing to take it. Send me or another *landed man* to see your kinsman Haraldr, and let him be offered a reconciliation according to the advice of the best men on both sides, and offer him the power he has a right to possess; there are so many men of wisdom and good will with King Haraldr that it will be easy to persuade him to accept this proposal.'

Then King Magnús replied, 'We will have had little time to enjoy the victory by which we subjected all this land in the autumn, if we are now to give it up without a try, and I am not willing to do that; suggest another way for me to keep the land.'

Then Sigurðr replied, 'Then my advice is to go away from here

out of Gulapingslög and north to Þrándheimr, and try whether you can get support from the Þrændir.’

Then the king answered, ‘Will not Haraldr then take possession of all the land to the east, if we flee?’

Then Sigurðr replied, ‘There is one further plan possible, though not a pleasant one; send the *gestir* and have them kill one or two of the *landed men* who have stayed at home and will not come to you, and give the rights of feasting which they have owned to some of those who are here with you and whom you trust well. It may be then that others will be by and will not want to wait for such visits at home.’

Then the king replied, ‘That course [324] will be unpopular, and if I kill my *landed men* and give their revenues to others, it may be that they will not treat me any better.’

Then Sigurðr stood up and went away, and said, ‘Why should I not give you the advice, lord, which I can see you want to take, to stay here in Björgvin until Haraldr comes with all his force, and then you will have either to flee or to suffer mutilation, or, a third possibility, death.’

CHAPTER 95

Then King Haraldr came to Björgvin on Christmas Eve with all his forces, and was not willing to approach the town to fight because of the feast, and he sailed into Flóruvágur and lay there over Christmas; he had a large force, and a further eleven *hundred* (1320) men came to join him from the regions during Christmas. This was called *múgavetrim* (the Mob-winter).

King Magnús also made great preparations in the town and had a lot of work done every day over Christmas. He had catapults built out on Hólmr, and he had a barrier erected from out at Christ Church over to Munkabryggja, made of wood and partly of iron chains, so that no ships could be sailed into the bay. He also had caltrops made and spread around on Jóansvellir, and he held a meeting with the townspeople and asked them to help him, and they all made fair promises about that.

On the day after the last day of Christmas⁷⁶² King Haraldr advanced

⁷⁶² 7th January.

on the town with all his army, and they rowed the ships stern first towards Norðnes. But King Magnús had his divisions out on Hólmr, and King Magnús's men thought that King Haraldr and his men [325] would go ashore on Norðnes. Then King Magnús turned all his forces back through the town, and when they came to the head of the bay they saw that Haraldr had steered all his ships to Hólmr, and by then his troops had all come ashore. Then King Haraldr advanced in through the town. And many townspeople slipped into their premises and buildings when King Magnús went in through the town, and it was not easy to get hold of them. And when King Magnús's men saw what an overwhelming force King Haraldr had, all King Magnús's army fled, some up into the mountains, some back into the town, and some onto the caltrops. And King Magnús then went out onto his ship and sat down on the *after-deck*, with only a few men. For not only did they not have enough men to get away on the ship, but also the defences which had been built across the bay prevented them. So says Einarr Skúlason:⁷⁶³

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 263. The bay of Bergen | <i>Haraldsdrápa</i> II 4 |
| they blocked for a week; | <i>Mork</i> 401 |
| no chance had the rowlock-Skrautis ⁷⁶⁴ | <i>Hkr</i> III 286–87 |
| of rushing away. | |

Then King Haraldr's men reached the ship, and King Magnús was captured, and he was in the custody of King Haraldr for some time while his case was discussed. In this encounter not many men were killed, and most were given quarter. So says Halldórr skvaldri:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| [326] 264. Men could not, when the king | <i>Haraldsdrápa</i> 4 |
| keen in battle showed fear, | |
| defend the town—the force | |
| fled—against the king's weapons. | |

⁷⁶³ Einarr Skúlason was an Icclander, related to Egill Skalla-Grimsson, and a prolific poet, much quoted by Snorri Sturluson in his *Poetic Edda*. He composed two poems in honour of Haraldr gilli and is said in *Skáldatal* to have composed also for his co-ruler Magnús blindi; he composed poems for, among others, all three of Haraldr's sons, principally Eysteinn, and a *Haraldssona kvæði* for all three. His best-known poem is the long Christian *drápa Geisli*, in honour of St Óláfr, composed for a meeting in Trondheim in 1152.

⁷⁶⁴ *há-Skrauti*: 'Skrauti (animal name) of the rowlock', ship.

After that King Magnús was both blinded and castrated,⁷⁶⁵ and Bishop Reinaldr of Stafangr was hanged out on Hólmr near the catapult. Then King Magnús went north to Þrándheimr and adopted a monk's habit there, and then King Haraldr took control of the whole country.

King Haraldr married Ingiríðr, daughter of Røgnvaldr Ingason, son of Steinkell. Ingiríðr had previously been married to Heinrekr skötlær (Skate-thigh), son of King Sveinn Sveinsson of Denmark. The sons of Heinrekr and Ingiríðr were King Magnús of the Swedes and Jarl Røgnvaldr and Búriz. King Haraldr had a son with Þóra, daughter of Guðþormr grábarði (Greybeard). He was called Sigurðr. Two years later he had another son with Queen Ingiríðr. He was called Ingi.

CHAPTER 96

Sigurðr, who was called slembidjákn (Dashing-Deacon),⁷⁶⁶ came to Norway over the sea from the west. He went south to Denmark and carried hot iron there to prove his paternity, that he was the son of Magnús berfœttr, and five bishops were present at this ordeal, and he passed the test. So says Ívarr Ingimundarson:⁷⁶⁷

265. Five bishops,	<i>Sigurðarbólkr</i> 12
the best esteemed,	<i>Mork</i> 408
put the sovereign's	<i>Hkr</i> III 298
descent to the test;	
[327] so it proved	

⁷⁶⁵ and, according to *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 401), had his feet cut off.

⁷⁶⁶ *slembidjákn*: The nickname, often shortened to *slembir*, is probably related to Norwegian *slemba* 'slam'. *Heimskringla* seems to relate the name to Sigurðr's being *ofsamaðr mikill ok óeiramaðr* 'a very overbearing and untuly man' (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Hkr* III 297n.). Andersson and Gade (*Morkinskinna* 2000, 455), following Finnur Jónsson 1907, relate it to Modern Icelandic *slembilukka* 'unexpected luck' and translate 'Fortuitous Deacon'. As for Sigurðr's clerical title, it is said in *Heimskringla* that 'he was set to book in his childhood and became a cleric and was consecrated as a deacon' (*Hkr* III 297).

⁷⁶⁷ *Heimskringla* assigns this *fornyrðislag* verse to Ívarr's poem *Sigurðarbólkr*, dealing with the life and martyrdom of Sigurðr slembidjákn. *Morkinskinna* cites 45 verses from this poem, of which only two are found in *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*. See Andersson and Gade in *Morkinskinna* 2000, 46–55.

that of the powerful
munificent king
Magnús was the father.

From there Sigurðr slembidjárn went to Norway and came to see his brother King Haraldr, but he was coldly received, and King Haraldr and his advisers put no faith in his ordeal, and then Sigurðr was seized and taken onto a boat, and people rowed away with him. And when they came far from the town of Björgvin, Sigurðr sat *amidships* and had a mantle without fur over him; he looked down at the planks in front of him and had his hands on the ties of the mantle and raised them to his neck. And then he stood up and asked to go to the side of the boat. Two men stood up with him and held on to his clothes. And as soon as he came to the side, he grabbed each with one hand and plunged overboard with both of them. And because the boat was moving fast and they did not succeed in turning it quickly, their ways parted for the time being.

Sigurðr took one extremely long dive, and when he came up he was close to the shore, and he had landed before they managed to get their men back on the boat. Sigurðr was very quick on his feet, and they were not able to catch him at that time; they went back to Björgvin to see King Haraldr and told him what had happened, and their expedition was not much praised.

Then Sigurðr went to his friends in secret, and had a few men with him. And when Christmas had almost come he came secretly to Björgvin, and the townspeople hid him. On the evening before St Lucy's day,⁷⁶⁸ when Haraldr was sitting at table, [328] the man sitting next to him spoke to him.

'Lord,' he said, 'we have been having a dispute, and finally we have wagered a mark on it, and no one can solve it but you alone,' and he said to him in private, 'I said, lord, that you would be sleeping with Queen Ingiríðr tonight, but they say that you will lie with Þóra.'

Then the king answered, 'You will lose your stake,' and in this way they found out that he would lie with Þóra. These men had been planted within the court as spies by Sigurðr slembidjárn. On this same night Sigurðr contrived it for King Haraldr and his men

⁷⁶⁸ The Eve of St Lucy is 13th December.

that the king's bodyguard was outside the room where everyone believed he was sleeping, and the one that he was actually in was unguarded. Then during the night Sigurðr and his men came to the room and got in before the king woke up, and at once made an armed attack on him. So King Haraldr gilli lost his life from many wounds. That was towards the end of the night.

Then Sigurðr and his men went and got themselves a boat, and in the morning when dawn came they rowed out into the bay below the quays of Björgvin, and Sigurðr announced that he was responsible for the killing of his brother King Haraldr, and asked the *landed men* and the retainers and the townspeople to accept him as king just as his brother had been before. But they all answered at once that he would never be king, and spoke in this way, that 'there are two reasons why you can never become king; the first is that we do not believe you are King Magnús's son, and the second is that if something so unfortunate did happen as that King Magnús had a son with Þóra Saxadóttir, Sigríðr's sister, then your begetting was unpropitious,⁷⁶⁹ and so it has turned out, in that you have now murdered [329] your brother.'

And when Sigurðr saw that he would not achieve anything there for the present, he rowed away.

King Haraldr's body was buried in the old Christ Church. After that the men of Björgvin adopted Ingi Haraldsson as king, and he was then less than one year old. And when the Þrændir heard of King Haraldr's death they adopted King Haraldr's son Sigurðr as king. He was then in his third year.

King Haraldr had been king for six years when he fell, four alongside his kinsman Magnús and then two as sole king. Einarr Skúlason also mentions that King Haraldr had fought twice in Denmark, once off Hveðn against some Vikings:

⁷⁶⁹ *Sigríðar* is the reading of the B1 and 2 MSS; the other versions have *Sigurðar*. That *Sigríðar* is correct is clear from *Morkinskinna* (Mork 405), which gives fuller details of Sigurðr's parentage: 'There was a man named Sigurðr, son of Þóra, Saxi's daughter. She claimed that he was the son of Magnús berfœttr, but Magnús's friends and confidants kept this secret because it was problematical, given that Þóra's sister Sigríðr was the mother of King Óláfr, the son of King Magnús.' (*Morkinskinna* 2000, 367). This is the problem which makes the citizens of Bergen call Sigurðr's birth 'unpropitious', for Magnus's fathering children on two sisters was a serious form of incest condemned by the church.

266. Thin blades you had bathed red
in blood of disloyal warriors
close to high Hveðn, courageous
colourer of the raven's mouth.⁷⁷⁰

Haraldsdrápa I 1
Mork 402
Hkr III 296

Einarr says this further:

267. By Hlésey's flat beach you battled,
bold reddener of Hár's mailcoat,⁷⁷¹
where storms blew the banners
billowing over warriors.

Haraldsdrápa I 2
Mork 403
Hkr III 296

[330] He also says that King Haraldr was victorious in both battles.

After the fall of King Haraldr, Sigurðr slembidjákn went to Norðhǫrðaland and in to Sogn, and men came to join him. Sigurðr held a meeting with the Sygnir and Norðhǫrðar (people of Sogn and North Hordaland), and at that meeting he was given the title of king, and many came over to his side and entered his service. So says Ívarr Ingimundarson:

268. Hǫrðar and Sygnir,
Haraldr having fallen,
accepted the generous
son of Magnús;
at the meeting
many swore oaths
to the king's son
who succeeded his brother.

Sigurðarbolkr 13
Mork 414
Hkr III 302

Then Sigurðr got a twenty-bench ship and some small *cutters*. Then he turned north along the coast, and as soon as he came north past Staðr, the Mœrir rose against him, because they had agreed with the Þrændir on allegiance to King Sigurðr.⁷⁷² Then Sigurðr travelled quickly and intended to come north into Niðaróss unexpectedly, and he came up to Niðarhólmr during the night. He was told there that news would have gone before him into the town. Then

⁷⁷⁰ *hrǫfnis munnlituduðr*: 'colourer of the raven's mouth', warrior.

⁷⁷¹ *Hǫars serkryjóðr*: 'reddener of Hǫarr's (Óðinn's) shirt (coat of mail)', warrior. *Hǫars* is the reading of *Hkr* (MSS *Hárs*) where *Fsk* has *hærs* (B) *halfs* (A). The reading of (A), which could represent the name of the legendary king Hálfir, is also found in *Morkinskinna*.

⁷⁷² *Sigurðr*: that is, the infant son of Haraldr gilli.

he took King Magnús, who had been blinded, out of the monastery and took him with him, and believed that then more men would join him than before; and so it was. Then they went out of Þrándheimr, and soon afterwards Magnús and Sigurðr parted company.⁷⁷³

CHAPTER 97

[331] After the killing of Haraldr gilli, his son Sigurðr was adopted as king in Þrándheimr when he was in his fourth year, and King Ingi was adopted as king east in Vík when he was in his second year. Sigurðr's foster-father was Guðþormr Bárðason, father of Philippús. King Sigurðr was supported by Óttarr birtingr (Trout), Qgmundr sviptir (Shaker) and Pétr burðarsveinn (Errand-boy). Ingi was supported by his foster-father Qgmundr⁷⁷⁴ and Þjóstólfr Álason.

The summer after Ingi was adopted as king, his men fought a battle against King Magnús inn blindi (the Blind) at Mynni in Upplönd and were victorious. From Magnús's troop Halldórr Sigurðarson, Björn Erlingsson, Gunnarr of Gimsar and many other men fell there. Magnús fled east into Gautland. Ingi's men fought a second battle against Karl Sónason at Krókaskógr and won. Munan Qgmundarson and many Gautar fell there.

CHAPTER 98

At that time Eiríkr eimuni came north from Denmark with Magnús inn blindi, and they had a huge army. They took this force to Túnsberg. There Ormr Dagsson opposed them and they were not able to get ashore. From there they headed in to Ósló. Þjóstólfr Álason was there facing them. There Þjóstólfr shot Áskell, Eiríkr's forecastle-man, with a spear. Then the relics of St Hallvarðr were taken up to Fors in Raumaríki and were kept there for three months. Then Eiríkr burned the whole town of Ósló and the church of St

⁷⁷³ At this point *Fagrskinna* (B) comes to an end.

⁷⁷⁴ *Qgmundr föstri hans*: Ingi's foster-father is later called Ámundi (p. 267); this agrees with *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 418) and *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 303). The Qgmundr named here may be another of Ingi's supporters, Qgmundr drengr Kyrpinga-Ormsson (named on p. 270).

Hallvarðr. Then Þjóstólfr came down from Raumaríki with a large force, and Eiríkr was not able to get ashore because of the host of men on land, and he headed his troop away south along the coast and fought a battle in [332] Hornborusund against King Ingi and his foster-father Ámundi and Gyrðr Lög-Bersason. They killed many of Eiríkr's men, and he fled to Denmark with great ignominy.

CHAPTER 99

Sigurðr slembidjárn went to Denmark that same summer⁷⁷⁵ and fought two battles against the Wends and won both; then he made his way to Elfr, and seized there three ships from the troop of Þórir hvínantorði (Whistling-turd)⁷⁷⁶ and Óláfr son of Haraldr kesja (*Halberd*), who was married to Ragnhildr, daughter of King Magnús Ólafsson. Then Sigurðr chased Óláfr ashore, and Þórir went to Konungahella. Sigurðr headed there in pursuit with his troop and they exchanged shots. There many fell on both sides. There fell Úlfheðinn Söxólfsson, a man from the north of Iceland,⁷⁷⁷ a forecastle man of Sigurðr. But when Sigurðr was lying in Portyrja on Lingarðssíða, a force was brought against him⁷⁷⁸ from Túnsberg, and Sigurðr escaped there with difficulty. There fell many from Sigurðr's troop, Fiðr geit (She-goat) and Áskell Smiðsson, and Sigurðr sailed south to Denmark. There Kolbeinn Þorljótsson of Bataldr perished. He was on the boat being towed behind the ship when they were sailing fast. Then Sigurðr wrecked his ship as he was coming south. Over the winter he stayed in Álaborg.

The following summer Magnús and Sigurðr sailed both together

⁷⁷⁵ This material is introduced in *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 419) with an acknowledgement of Eiríkr Oddsson as source; he is said to have gathered information from a *lendr maðr*, Hákon magi, who participated in the events (but is not otherwise known). Eiríkr Oddsson's book is named in *Heimskringla* as *Hryggjarstykki* (*Hkr* III 318–19). See introduction, p. 10; Bjarni Guðnason, 1978. In addition *Morkinskinna* follows closely and frequently cites verses from Ívarr Ingimundarson's *Sigurðarbálkr*, a poem honouring Sigurðr slembidjárn, on these events.

⁷⁷⁶ On this nickname see Finnur Jónsson 1907, 331, and *Hkr* II 309 n. 1. The sense may be 'Farter'.

⁷⁷⁷ See Bjarni Guðnason 1978, 128.

⁷⁷⁸ *gerðu menn lið at hónum: menn* is emended from MS *Magnús konungr* 'King Magnús'. *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 422) and *Heimskringla* have *Túnsbergsmenn gerðu lið at honum* (*Hkr* III 309).

from the south with seven ships and came to Listi. There they killed Benteinn Kolbeinsson. Ingi himself opposed them there and pursued Hákon pungelta (Purse-tanner) and all his troop ashore. Sigurðr stokkr (Log),⁷⁷⁹ son of Eindriði of Gautsdalr, his brother Eiríkr hæll (Heel), and Andrés kelduskítr (Well-fouler) fled away further along the fjord. Then Sigurðr and Magnús sailed north outside the islands with three ships [333] to Hálogaland. That winter King Magnús stayed on Bjarkey with Víðkunnr Jóansson, while Sigurðr went north to Finnmark with twenty men.

The following spring Sigurðr made his way from the north with two *cutters* which the Lapps had given him. Then Sigurðr went in to Vágar and captured there Sveinn the priest and his sons; then he had them all killed. From there he went east into Vík⁷⁸⁰ and there seized Vilhjálmr skinnari (Skinner), a *landed man*, and another, Þóraldi hestr (Stallion), and killed them both. Then he met Styrkár glæsirófa (Shining-tail) and killed him. Off Valsmiðsboer⁷⁸¹ they met Svína-Grímr (Swine-Grímr), and Sigurðr had his left hand chopped off. South in Möerr Sigurðr captured Heðinn harðmagi (Hard-belly) and Kálfr kringluauga (Round-eye). Heðinn they killed, but not Kálfr. And south in Herðla Einarr, son of Laxa-Páll (Salmon-Páll) had an estate. He had gone to a Rogation-day meeting in Hamarsfjörðr. Then Sigurðr and his men took all the property on his estate, and a *longship* with twenty-five rowing-benches and his four-year-old son, who was sleeping at the house of one of his workmen. And the workman said it was his own son. Then none of them took notice of the boy. When he came home Einarr gave the workman two ounces of gold.

Sigurðr and his men went east into Vík and captured Finn, son of Sauða-Úlfr (Sheep-Úlfr), at Kvildir there in the east as he was going about collecting King Ingi's rents. They hanged Finn and then went south to Denmark.

At that time Ingi sent a letter to (his brother) Sigurðr with an

⁷⁷⁹ *stokkr: storkr* (Stork) in *Morkinskinna* (Mork 424) and *Heimskringla* (Hkr III 311).

⁷⁸⁰ *i Vík austr: Morkinskinna* (Mork 426) has *i Víkar*, *Heimskringla* (Hkr III 312) *suðr i Víkar*, which is in Hálogaland, south of Vágar. Ívarr's verse, cited in *Morkinskinna*, locates Vilhjálmr's death in Vágar.

⁷⁸¹ The place is referred to in *Morkinskinna* (Mork 426–27) as 'Hvalsnes'; in an accompanying verse as 'Valsnes'. This is also the reading of *Heimskringla* (Hkr III 312).

earnest request to come to his assistance.⁷⁸² And later that same summer, almost at the beginning of winter, King Magnús and Sigurðr (slembidjákn) came north with thirty ships, manned both with Danish troops and also Norwegians. [334] Then Ingi and Sigurðr came against them with twenty very large ships. And they met on the Sunday after St Martin's Day⁷⁸³ in Hvalir on the east of the fjord by Hólmr inn grái and fought there. In the first onslaught the Danes retreated with eighteen ships and sailed back to the south. Then the ships of Sigurðr and Magnús were cleared. Hreiðarr Grjótgarðsson and Saupprúðr withstood longest in the troop of Magnús, who was lying on his bed, but all the others fell there.⁷⁸⁴ There fell Brúsi, Sigurðr's forecastle man, Hallvarðr fægir (Polisher) and Ívarr Kolbeinsson. Ívarr had gone into Haraldr's room and been the first to wound him.⁷⁸⁵ There fell a large part of the troop of Sigurðr and Magnús. More than sixty men fell on the island. Those who were killed there were Sigurðr the priest, son of Bergþórr Másson, and Klémettr, son of Ari Einarsson. Ívarr Kálfsson got the ship of Jón Bergþórsson, who was then married to Cecilia, daughter of Gyrðr Bárðarson, with Arnbjörn ambi⁷⁸⁶ and Ívarr dynta (Dint) Starason. A ransom was set for Arnbjörn, but Ívarr dynta they killed.

But when Ingi and Sigurðr had been rulers for six years, their brother Eysteinn came from Scotland to where they were in the north in Þrándheimr. Árni sturla (Stir), Þorleifr Brynjólfsson and Kolbeinn hrúga had gone to fetch him. He was adopted as king at the Eyraþing during the Rogation days, so that he was to be king over a third part of the land, and the brothers agreed on that when they met. No trials of Eysteinn's paternity were made because what Haraldr had said about it was believed. And the brothers were on good terms while (their foster-fathers)⁷⁸⁷ were ruling the kingdom.

⁷⁸² The text of the letter is included in *Morkinskinna* (Mork 429–30) and *Heimskringla* (Hkr III 314–15).

⁷⁸³ St Martin's Day is 11th November.

⁷⁸⁴ *Fagrskinna* does not actually relate the death of Magnús, who is said in *Morkinskinna* (Mork 434) and *Heimskringla* (Hkr III 316) to be killed along with his retainer Hreiðarr Grjótgarðsson who was attempting to lift him onto another ship.

⁷⁸⁵ *Heimskringla* (Hkr III 301) names Ívarr as the first to strike in the attack on Haraldr gilli (see p. 264 above).

⁷⁸⁶ *ambi* is short for 'Arnbjörn'.

⁷⁸⁷ *þeir*: Apparently 'they' (the kings), but it must refer to the foster-fathers and other supporters of the three kings, named in the following sentence. *Morkinskinna* (Mork 445) has 'All went well between the brothers while their foster-fathers were alive'; see also *Heimskringla* (Hkr III 330).

But after the deaths of Gyrðr,⁷⁸⁸ Ámundi, Þjóstólfr and [335] Óttarr birtingr, who was married to King Ingi's mother Ingiríðr, Qgmundr sviptir and Qgmundr drengr, son of Kyrpinga-Ormr, Ingi and Sigurðr had separate retinues. Ingi was crook-backed,⁷⁸⁹ and yet he was the most popular of them. Soon after that Gregorius, son of Dagr and of Ragnhildr Skoptadóttir, took up the government of the land alongside Ingi, who greatly relied on him all his life.

At that time Cardinal Nikulás góði (the Good) came to Norway and gave the pallium to Jón Birgisson, and he was the first archbishop in Norway.⁷⁹⁰ And when Nikulás went to Rome he became pope, and was then called Adrianus.

And they arranged a meeting between them one winter in Upplönd, where they were to be reconciled. Sigurðr had killed two of King Eysteinn's men, Haraldr inn víkverska (from Vík) in Björgvin, and the priest Jóan taparðr (Tabard), son of Bjarni Sigurðarson,⁷⁹¹ north in Kaupangr. There they were reconciled and sat for a long time in discussion; the result of their counsels was that they thought it best to take Ingi's share of the kingdom from him and leave him with twenty-three estates and thirty servants, for they thought he did not have good enough health to be king. They intended to have a meeting about this in Björgvin in the summer, if possible. This matter came to the attention of Ingi and Gregorius, and they went to Björgvin with a great force. Soon afterwards Sigurðr arrived, and with a considerably smaller force. Eysteinn came later to the meeting than had been intended.

⁷⁸⁸ *Gyrðar*: emendation of MS *Guðrøðar* (*Guðrøðar*).

⁷⁸⁹ According to *Ágrip* (*Ágr* 52) Ingi was 'sickly, with a broken back and a withered leg, so that he walked very lame'. Saxo Grammaticus (1931, 446–47) attributes this to his being dropped by his nurse as a baby; *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 415–16) to injuries received while carried in a sling by Þjóstólfr Álason at the battle of Mynni (p. 160) as an infant: 'It is said that it was here that King Ingi got the ill-health he suffered all his life, in that his back and one leg became crooked. That leg was shorter than the other, and so weak thath he could never walk properly as long as he lived'.

⁷⁹⁰ The English cardinal Nicholas Breakspear came to Norway from England in 1152 (Johnsen 1945). Jón Birgisson was archbishop 1152–57. The pallium is a circular band of white wool ornamented with six black crosses; it is reserved to the Pope and to archbishops who may wear it with the permission of the Holy See.

⁷⁹¹ Jóan prest Tapparzson, Bjarna Sigurðarsonar: literally 'the priest Jóan, son of Tapparðr, Bjarni Sigurðarson'; so also *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 455): *Ioan prest Tabarz s.* (*Hkr* III 337). But *Codex Frisianus* gives *taparð* as Jóan's nickname (*Fsk* 335n.).

King Ingi had trumpets sounded for a meeting out on Hólmr, and both Sigurðr and Ingi arrived there, and the meeting was well-attended. Gregorius came to the meeting with a gilded helmet, and all his followers were helmeted, undoubtedly ninety men.

King Ingi stood up and told everyone what he had heard of how his brothers had planned to [336] treat him. He asked for support, and said he would rather lose his life than give up his patrimony. People greeted his speech with applause and said they were willing to follow him. Then King Sigurðr stood up and said that he and his brother were not guilty of what Ingi accused them of. He said that Gregorius had spread the rumour, and said that he would not wait long before making that gilded helmet fall, and he declared that they would not both be about for long. Gregorius answered shortly and said he was not reluctant for a meeting. But a few days later a follower of Sigurðr killed a follower of Gregorius, and Gregorius wanted to attack Sigurðr, but King Ingi dissuaded him, and nothing came of it.

That same evening Sigurðr trafali (Nuisance), son of Eysteinn trafali, a follower of King Sigurðr, killed Sigurðr skrudhryna (Ornament-corner?), a follower of King Ingi, an old man and popular with everyone, and King Sigurðr was said to be behind it. For these reasons they prepared to attack King Sigurðr, and Gregorius was most determined on that.

King Sigurðr was drinking on the premises of Sigríðr sæta (Grass-widow), inside Sandbrú litla. These men attacked Sigurðr with King Ingi: Gregorius and Árni Ívarsson and Áslákr Erlendsson. But Sigurðr and his men went into an upper room that was in the building, and shot arrows out of the windows and broke up the fireplaces and threw the stones at them. There Einarr Laxa-Pálsson of Sigurðr's troop fell, and Hallvarðr Gunnarsson was shot in the loft.

Ingi's men broke into the house to get at them, and much of the troop accepted quarter. Then King Sigurðr went out and asked for a hearing. He was carrying a gilded shield, and people quickly recognised him and would not listen to him, and men shot arrows at him that looked like driving snow. By the time most of his troop had left his side, the buildings were very much torn apart; then he went out with Þórðr húsfreyja (Housewife) in front of him. They were trying to get to where Ingi was, and Sigurðr called out to ask his brother for quarter, and he was willing to give him quarter, but no notice was taken of this, and they were cut down at once. This deed

was [337] criticised, and people held King Ingi responsible, but most accept that it was not his idea, as Einarr Skúlason bears witness:

269. To blame Ingi no wolf-nourisher⁷⁹² *Ingadrápa* 2
 has need—let all learn *Mork* 458
 the true story of the skirmish—
 that swords cut down the ruler.
 The war-eager king was not able
 to end the fight, though he wished to;
 keen was the ruler's retinue
 to wreak death on the king.

Then people asked who had had the king's standard carried out. Einarr then spoke a verse:

270. Dagr's son, in a fighting fury, *Ingadrápa* 3
 had the fair shaft carried *Mork* 458
 out on the street, with its splendid
 standards; strong spears were shaken.
 Men died in the din of Gunnr's
 gosling⁷⁹³ before the hail of
 the bowstring; in the middle of Björgyn
 brothers fought for no reason.

[338] Further, Einarr spoke another verse:

271. The sender of gold⁷⁹⁴ would not *Ingadrápa* 4
 so soon have forfeited *Mork* 459
 his life—spears far went flying
 in the fearful bows' snowstorm⁷⁹⁵
 if from the east, the excellent
 Eysteinn's fleet had been hastened
 by a steady wind from the south,
 sooner by two days, to Björgyn.

But three days later King Eysteinn came west from Vík with thirty ships into Flóruvágur. Then messages passed between them and they came to terms, but did not meet. Sigurðr Haraldsson had been king for nineteen years, and was buried at Christ Church out on Hólmr.

⁷⁹² *ulfgrennir*: 'wolf-feeder', warrior, man.

⁷⁹³ *Gunnar gagls gnyr*: 'din of Gunnr's (valkyrie's) gosling (raven)', battle.

⁷⁹⁴ *seima sendir*: 'sender, giver of gold (-thread)', generous lord.

⁷⁹⁵ *bóga drífa*: 'snow-storm of bows', shower of arrows, battle.

And while Eysteinn was lying in Flóruvágur, Gregorius volunteered to make an attack on him though Ingi did not commit himself; he said there would not be a better opportunity later. Many argued against this and nothing came of it. Then Eysteinn went east to Vík and Ingi north to Þrándheimr, and then they were nominally reconciled, and yet they did not meet.

Gregorius went east into Vík and stayed on his estate at Bratsberg. Then King Eysteinn made an expedition against him, meaning to put him to death, but he learned of it and fled away to Upplönd with ninety men, and afterwards went north to Kaupangr to see King Ingi, and arrived in the north before Christmas. Ingi was glad to see him and asked him to accept whatever property of his he wanted. Then King Eysteinn [339] burned Gregorius's estate and slaughtered the livestock. The same winter, the fine large boat-houses that the earlier King Eysteinn had owned were burned down. With them were burned ships owned by King Ingi. Blame for that was attributed to King Eysteinn and to Philippús Gyrðarson, King Sigurðr's foster-brother.

CHAPTER 100

But the next summer the kings met on the Seleyjar, and Ingi came from the north, and Eysteinn from the east. Then they both had large followings, but Ingi's was much the larger. It reached the point where they were about to fight, and yet they nominally reached agreement, and Eysteinn was to pay back the money of Ingi and Gregorius, but it was not forthcoming, and so the whole settlement was void. Then King Ingi went east into Vík, and Eysteinn north to Þrándheimr. Then hostile messages passed between them, and they each killed some of the other's men.

At that time many men were lured away from King Eysteinn to King Ingi, and in that number were Bárðr standhali (Stiff-tail) and Símon skálpr (Sheath), son of Hallkell húkr (Croucher). And when two years had passed since the fall of King Sigurðr, then both kings gathered their troops, and Ingi travelled from the east with eighty ships, and Eysteinn from the north with forty-five ships. Ingi lay in the south off Mostr, and Eysteinn a little further south in Grœningasund.⁷⁹⁶ Eysteinn sent Áslákr ungi (the Young) and Árni sturla to see

⁷⁹⁶ According to *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 461) and *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 343), Grœningasund

Ingi; they took one ship. And when Ingi's men recognised them, they attacked them and killed many of their men and took the ship away from them, but Áslákr and Árni jumped ashore and went to see Eysteinn and told him what had happened. Eysteinn then held a meeting of his followers and told how aggressively they were behaving, and asked people to support him.

‘And we have a large and good force, and I am determined not to fly if you are willing to go with me.’

There was no applause at his speech, and the following night they rowed many ships away in secret, some to [340] join Ingi and some to Björgvin, and some into Firðir. And when it was light, ten ships remained with Eysteinn. He left behind there the large *dragon-ship* which he [the earlier Eysteinn]⁷⁹⁷ had had built, and other ships as well, and they cut the *dragon-ship* to pieces and damaged it badly. Then Eysteinn boarded Eindriði Jóansson's ship and they went into Sogn, and from there east to Vík.

CHAPTER 101

Then Ingi took the ships and made his way with his troop outside the islands east into the Vík. Eysteinn was to the east of Foldin and had nearly twelve *hundred* (1440) men. But when they saw Ingi's fleet they pushed off, took to the woods and scattered in all directions. The king stayed behind with one other man. Then Ingi's men pursued him. Símon skálpr found him as he was going off into a bush. There was a large party with Símon, but when they laid hands on the king, King Eysteinn begged him to let him escape and said that would become him better.⁷⁹⁸ Símon answered and said that that would not happen. Then the king asked to hear mass before he was done to death, and they arranged that. Then he lay face-down on the ground and spread out his arms away from his body and asked that he be struck with blows in the shape of a cross between the

is north (*lítilu norðar*) of Mostr. The straits have been located between Bergen and the islands off its south coast.

⁷⁹⁷ The words in brackets are from *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 461). Here *Fagrskinna* has only *hann* ‘he’, but the reference is to Dreki, the large ship built by King Eysteinn Magnússon (chapter 92).

⁷⁹⁸ At this point the surviving version of *Morkinskinna* breaks off.

shoulders, and that was done, and the king was considered to have behaved with dignity, while Símon was condemned for this affair, as Einarr Skúlason bears witness:

- [341] 272. The man accustomed to killing,
 who the king betrayed, most evil,
 Símon skálpr, will but slowly
 for such deeds get absolution.
- Eysteinsdrápa* 2
Hkr III 346

Eysteinn's body was buried at Fors (Foss in Ranríki).

CHAPTER 102

Qgmundr, Sigurðr of Reyrr, Philippús Gyrðarson, Eindriði Jóansson and many other leaders supported King Sigurðr's son Hákon herðibreiðr (Broad-shoulder) in opposition to King Ingi, and gave him the title of king.⁷⁹⁹ They and Ingi fought a great battle east on the Elfr. Gregorius Dagsson and Erlingr skakki were both on Ingi's side. There Eindriði Jóansson fell, and a great multitude from Hákon's army. From then on the relations of Hákon and his supporters with Ingi were poor as long as they both lived. They instigated schemes of many kinds against each other and this led to much killing, and in the last year of Ingi's life, Ingi and Gregorius were in Björgvin. Then they learned that Hákon . . .⁸⁰⁰

⁷⁹⁹ *Morkinskinna* (*Mork* 442) gives an account of the birth of Hákon as the result of an encounter between King Sigurðr and a woman called Þóra who worked for a man called Símon (Þorbergsson according to *Hkr* III 326).

⁸⁰⁰ At this point there is a gap in the text. The corresponding passage in *Heimskringla* covers some 35 pages of the modern edition and tells of the worsening relations of the kings Ingi and Hákon, the death of Gregorius in a trap set by King Hákon (*Hkr* III 364), Ingi's death in battle (368), a digression concerning the giving of St Óláfr's sword Hneitir to the church built in his honour in Byzantium (369–72), the assumption of power by Erlingr Skakki as regent for his son Magnús, son of Kristín, daughter of Sigurðr jórsalafari (372), his defeat of King Hákon in a sea battle (383), the proclaiming of Jarl Sigurðr Sigurðarson (son of Sigurðr munnr) as king by the people of Upplönd (384), the raids of Sigurðr's men on the people of Vík, with the consequence that they passed a resolution by law condemning him and his men to hell (385). This is the 'unheard-of act' referred to as the text of *Fagrskinna* resumes. The name of the speaker, the priest Hróaldr langtali, can also be supplied from the similar context in *Heimskringla*. The missing portion of *Fagrskinna*, though undoubtedly more compressed, would have covered the bulk of this material.

CHAPTER 103

[342] . . . disturbance of the crowd, that that unheard-of act was undertaken. He (the priest Hróaldr langtali) was a most eloquent man, and all that speech led to the same conclusion. Erlingr held a feast in the winter at Túnsberg, and made payment to his men there at Candlemas. Sigurðr went with his finest troop down into the Vík, and many men submitted to him because they were outnumbered, and many paid him money, and he travelled widely in this way. There were some in the troop who secretly applied to Erlingr for quarter. And the answer was received that all men who sought this would have their lives spared, but that those who were involved in the most serious offences would not be allowed to remain in the country. And when they learned this, it kept the troop together, because there were many who knew that they would be certain to be found guilty of offences against Erlingr. Philippús Gyrðarson made a settlement with Erlingr and got back his possessions and went to his estates.

CHAPTER 104

Soon afterwards Sigurðr's men came and killed him (Philippús), and each side dealt many blows on the other through pursuits or the killing of men, but the chieftains were not involved in those; these things are therefore not recorded in writing. At the beginning of Lent news came to Erlingr that Jarl Sigurðr was likely to bring his army to meet him, and he was sometimes heard of nearby, and sometimes further away. Erlingr then sent out spies to learn where they were approaching, and had trumpets blown every evening to summon all his forces out of the town, and they lay assembled at night, and were all drawn up in battle array. Then news came to Erlingr that Jarl Sigurðr and his troop were up at Ré. Then Erlingr set out from the town, and he took with him all the people of the town who were fit to wield weapons, except for twelve men who stayed behind to guard the town. He left the town on Tuesday of the second week [343] of Lent after three in the afternoon. They travelled overnight, and there were two men for each horse and each shield. One *hundred* and thirty men was the number;⁸⁰¹ and then

⁸⁰¹ According to *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 387) the number of Erlingr's men is *ner*

news came back to them that Jarl Sigurðr was at Dinnduxstaðir with six *hundred* (720) men.⁸⁰² Then Jarl Erlingr had his troop called together and told them what he had learned. The troop urged that they should fight immediately there that night.

Erlingr made a speech and spoke in this way: 'It must seem more likely to you that our encounter will take place. There are many men in their army whose handiwork we may well remember in cutting down King Ingi and other friends of ours, and it would take too long to enumerate them. They did that with deeds of the devil and with his help and villainy, for it is stated in the laws of our country that no one is so depraved that it is not called villainy or a murderous deed for men to kill each other at night, and this army has sought the advantage, under the instruction of magicians, of fighting at night, not by sunlight. And with enterprises like this they have achieved the victory of overcoming such a leader as they have now brought down. We have often said such things, and now their conduct is evident. We must rather keep to the policy which is more familiar to us, of fighting in clear daylight in battle array, not creeping up on people during the night. We have an army not over-sufficient against a larger force. We must await day and light, and keep our battle array in case they want to make any attack on us.'

After that the troops sat down; some pulled apart hay-ricks and made themselves beds with the hay. Some sat on their shields, and the weather was cold with sleet falling.

Sigurðr and his men got the news, but not before the troop had almost reached them, and they got up and armed themselves, and did not know how large a force Erlingr had. Some wanted to flee, but most wanted to stay. Sigurðr was considered only eloquent, not much of a man of action. He was also no less eager to flee then, and because of it he was much blamed by the troops.

And when dawn came, the jarl had drawn up his troop on a certain slope above the bridge and between it and the farm. A small river flowed there. Erlingr and his men drew up their ranks on the other side of the river, and at the back of the ranks were men on

þrettán hundruðum 'almost thirteen hundred (1560)'. This is more likely to be correct, since Sigurðr later finds himself outnumbered.

⁸⁰² Dinnduxstaðir is unidentified. According to *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 387) Sigurðr is 'at Ré at the farm called Hrafnanes' (Ramnes in Vestfold) with five hundred (600) men.

horseback. The jarl's men saw that there was a great difference in their numbers, and considered it advisable to head for the woods.

The jarl answered, 'You say there is no spirit in me; now that will be put to the test. Let every man look to himself, that no one may flee or falter before I do. We have a good defensive position; let them cross over the bridge, and when the standard comes over, let us throw ourselves upon them, and now let none flee from the other.'

Sigurðr had on a brown tunic and a red cloak, with *fitskór*⁸⁰³ on his feet. He had a shield at his side and a sword called Bastarðr (Bastard) in his hand, and said, 'God knows, I would rather manage to get one wound on Erlingr Skakki with Bastarðr than get much gold.'

CHAPTER 105

Erlingr's troop wanted to advance to the bridge, but he told them to turn up along the river; that was what they did there. The jarl's troop went up along the slope and on the banks which go out over the river. Then Erlingr commanded his troop to sing the Pater noster and pray that those whom God willed should have victory. And then they all sang the Kyrjáll⁸⁰⁴ [345] loudly and beat on their shields with their weapons. And in response to that din three *hundred* (360) men of the jarl's troop broke away and fled. Erlingr and his men followed them over the river. Then the rush forward stopped at the slope, and the men met on the top of the slope.

CHAPTER 106

Then a great battle began; at first spears were thrown, and immediately afterwards blows exchanged at close quarters, and the jarl's standards retreated, and Erlingr's men managed to get onto the

⁸⁰³ *fitskúar*: shoes made of hide from the back legs of reindeer or other animal.

⁸⁰⁴ *kyrjállinn*: Some MSS of *Heimskringla* have *Kýrie eleison*; others *kirjál*. *Kirjáll* was the name of a book which included the first part of the Mass, including the prayer 'Kyrie eleison'. In *Fagrskinna* Erlingr's company sings both prayers; in the closely similar passage in *Heimskringla*, Erlingr's 'Pater Noster' is answered by 'Kyrie eleison' from Sigurðr's side, and it is Erlingr's company that takes to flight (*Hkr* III 389).

slope. There was a short fight before the jarl's men fled to the wood that was behind them. Then they told the jarl to flee.

Then he replied, 'Forward with us now while we can,' and struck on both sides, and he fell there, and with him Jóan Sveinsson and almost sixty men. Few men were lost on Erlingr's side, and they pursued those who fled to the wood. Then Erlingr and his troop came to a halt when they came to the wood. Then the troop turned back and came to where thralls were trying to pull the clothes off Sigurðr, and he was not dead but unconscious; he had sheathed his sword in its scabbard, and it was lying there beside him. Erlingr took it up and struck them with it and told them to slink away. After that Erlingr returned with his army and established himself in Túnsberg. Seven days later Erlingr's men captured Eindriði ungi; he and all his crew were killed.

The following spring, Markús and his men went to Vík by the inland route and provided themselves with ships there. The next autumn, when Erlingr heard of it, he went east after them and they met at Konungahella. Markús and his troop fled ashore on the island Hising; the inhabitants, the [346] Hisingsbúar, rushed down there and joined forces with Markús's men. Then they shot at Erlingr as he rowed to the shore.

Then Erlingr said to his men, 'Let us take their ships, and not go ashore to fight against a land army here. The Hisingsbúar are bad and rash and foolish; they will only have this band with them for a short time, since Hising is a small place.'

So it was done; their ships were seized and taken over to Konungahella. Erlingr established himself with his troop in Konungahella. Markús and his men went ashore on Markir and planned attacks, and each side gathered news of the other.

CHAPTER 107

Erlingr had a numerous force, and gathered support from the area. In the early winter he went out to the island of Hising with a large force, and asked for an assembly. The people of Hising came down and held the assembly. Erlingr made charges against them, that they had joined forces with Markús, and in the end they agreed on a payment, and he arranged a meeting with them in a week's time in the town, and they appointed men for this, twelve *bændr*. And when

they came to Erlingr, he stipulated that the people of Hísing must pay three *hundred* (360) head of cattle.

Now the *bændr* went home and said that their expedition had not turned out well. Soon afterwards a severe frost set in and the river froze over and Erlingr's ships were icebound. Then the *bændr* withheld the penalty and stayed on Hísing in a body. Erlingr was in the town and held the Christmas feast, and the people of Hísing had communal feasts and parties on Hísing throughout Christmas. But the day after the fifteenth day of Christmas, Erlingr went out onto the island against them, seized and burned the buildings, and he killed men, and with that he went back to town.

[347] Then Markús went off to Upplönd and stayed there for a while. Then they went north over the uplands to Þrándheimr and were well received there and organised ships for themselves. Then Sigurðr was adopted as king there. Many capable men came there to join his band, and towards the end of spring Sigurðr and Markús set out from the north.

CHAPTER 108

Erlingr also set out from the east in the spring; he had a large force and big ships. And when he came north into the Vík, he met a head wind, and lay there for a large part of the summer, and some of his force went north to Björgvin to defend the land. Among them were Nikulás Skjaldvararson, Nökkvi Pálsson, Þórólfr dryllr (Fatty), Þorbjörn gjaldkeri (Steward) and many other *landed men*.

Markús and his troop sailed by the more northerly outer course past Björgvin. Men remarked a lot on the fact that they had a fair wind to get to wherever they wanted to go. But Erlingr's men got a head wind. And when Markús came east to Listi, they heard that Erlingr had an overwhelming army in the Vík. Then they turned and intended to make for Björgvin. But when they came past the town, they saw many and large longships rowing towards them, and then they saw no other course than to row away, and they did so. Nikulás and his companions rowed in pursuit of them. Markús and almost all his troop went ashore south on Skorpa; some rowed south into the sound. There they captured ships and killed the men they caught on them.

Some days later Eindriði heiðafylja (Heath-Filly) found Sigurðr

and Markús. They were taken to the town. [348] Sigurðr was cut down on Hvarfsnes, and Markús was hanged out beyond Grafardalr.

Then Magnús was sole king over Norway. Erlingr skakki alone had control of the government of the country and all the king's possessions, while the other *landed men* kept their revenues as they had before in the days of King Ingi.

Erlingr advanced his kinsmen extensively and gave them many estates. Erlingr was a very wise man and a great warrior; he was wealthy and eloquent, a fierce and harsh man. His practice with his enemies was to drive all men of importance into exile. As a result his kingdom was greatly beset by warfare, because the leaders who had been with King Hákon or Sigurðr fled to Denmark or up into Gautland, and made raids from there on the Vík. Among them were Qgmundr Simonarson and Friðrekr kœna (Boat), Arnúlfr skorpa (Rind) and Bjarni inn illi (the Bad) and many others.

When Erlingr was in Túnsberg, he had news from the east of the Vík that they were raiding there. Then he went east in search of them and managed to capture Friðrekr and Bjarni with two ships, and he had Friðrekr bound to an anchor and thrown overboard, and Bjarni was hanged, which caused no one any grief; but Friðrekr was a man of great family and was much mourned in Þrændalög, as will be related later.⁸⁰⁵

King Valdamarr of Denmark⁸⁰⁶ and Erlingr skakki made a private arrangement between themselves, which was confirmed by oaths on the part of Erlingr and his most important men, that if Magnús Erlingsson became king over Norway, King Valdamarr would get possession of all the land that lies between Líðandisnes and Denmark as regards its tributes and taxes, as the kings of Denmark had had in ancient times. King Valdamarr was to give support to Erlingr and his force for the winning of Norway, and let him have a safe haven in Denmark for his army. Then the king of Denmark sent his men with letters to Erlingr and demanded the division of the land [349] in accordance with the oaths. Erlingr raised the matter before those of his governors who were most powerful and had most say in decisions on behalf of King Magnús, and then the letters were read at assemblies and meetings so that all the people heard them,

⁸⁰⁵ See p. 285 below.

⁸⁰⁶ Valdamarr Knútsson (Valdemar the Great), king of Denmark 1157–82.

and everyone was in agreement: they said they were not willing to keep up the defence of the land on behalf of a foreign army or serve the king of the Danes or divide Norway in two, and they said they would follow him. Erlingr finally gave answers to the effect that all the people of the country had risen in protest and refused to submit to the king of the Danes; he offered him friendship and gifts, but he said he was not able to persuade the people of the country to divide any part of the land for him. And when the king of the Danes heard that, he was displeased, and showed hostility in return, and declared Erlingr's men and his son to be oath-breakers.

One year after the fall of King Hákon, the legate Stephanus⁸⁰⁷ came to Norway. He was well received on behalf of King Magnús and the bishop. Eysteinn was archbishop at the time.⁸⁰⁸ Eysteinn went on his diocesan visit north to Hálogaland. Then he tried to get the *bændr* to increase the dues and fines which had to be paid to the bishop. And because Bishop Eysteinn was an eloquent man, tall and of great family, both wealthy and popular—now Eysteinn pursued this case strongly and took powerful men along with him, his kinsmen and friends—what he asked for was done, that it was granted by the *bændr* that all the fines he was entitled to receive could be valued in pure silver. Previously the bishop's fine was the same as the king's legal tender, and the difference was half the value in the standard of money. And although there was nobody present to refuse on behalf of the *bændr*, Eysteinn gained much from all men who supported this business.

And during the following spring, Erlingr skakki came north to [350] Kaupangr. Then many people complained to him about this. Erlingr made no reply to this and listened to what people said. But when he came to a meeting, they discussed many matters relevant to the government of the country.

Then Erlingr skakki said, 'Lord,' he said, 'you will be acquainted with the law codes of the *Þrændir*. In all new impositions now, you will be breaking the law of the holy King Óláfr.'

⁸⁰⁷ Stephanus of Orvieto, sent by Pope Alexander III (*Hkr* III 395 n.)

⁸⁰⁸ Eysteinn Erlendsson was the second archbishop of Niðaróss, nominated in 1157; according to Snorri (*Hkr* III 390), the same year as the death of King Ingi, whose chaplain he had been. He was consecrated in 1161 and remained archbishop until his death in 1188, after which belief in his sanctity arose immediately (*ODS* 1997, 36).

The archbishop replied, 'His laws are not broken by an increase in his dues. What is a breach of the law is that the king of Norway is not the one that the laws prescribe.'

Erlingr replied, 'It was not greatly against your will that Magnús was adopted as king; everyone agreed to it, the bishops just as much as other people of the country.'

The archbishop replied, 'I will not speak against Magnús being king, as long as you are sure that the Þrændir do not consider it a violation of their laws to have a king who is not the son of a king.⁸⁰⁹ But I expect that not everyone will be in agreement if any who have genuine claims should come and demand land and power.'

Erlingr said, 'Since, Lord, it is not written in all law-books that he who is not a king's son must [not] be king, and since it was with the consent of you and the other bishops that Magnús was adopted as king over all the land, you can support him and his rule by making it God's law that he be king. If you were willing to anoint him and crown him and consecrate him as king, then it cannot be denied, for that is the law of both God and men, and he and I will give you full support in all enterprises for which you need our strength.'⁸¹⁰

The archbishop considered this matter and discussed it with Erlingr until it was all settled, and the meeting was appointed during the summer in Björgvin. Then King Magnús and the legate came there, Archbishop Eysteinn and many other good men.

⁸⁰⁹ 'The law of St Óláfr' is invoked elsewhere on the question of succession to the throne (see for example *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*), and 'probably meant the traditional rule, which was not formalized in any written law and was apparently fairly vague. Nor was it of very much use when choosing between several pretenders because it was compatible with joint rule or with different pretenders fighting one another' (Bagge 1996, 98). According to custom senior male members of the ruling dynasty could lay claim to kingship. Archbishop Eysteinn's implication that only the son of a king had a legitimate claim was in fact formalised in the new law he himself issued in 1163/64.

⁸¹⁰ Snorri's version of Erlingr's speech enlarges on the significance of Danish and English precedents where kings were legitimized by divine authority mediated by the church: 'William the Conqueror was not a king's son, and he was consecrated and crowned King of England, and the crown has been retained in his line of descent in England since and all have been crowned. Sveinn Úlfsson in Denmark was not a king's son, and yet he was crowned king there, as his sons were afterwards, and one after another those kinsmen were crowned kings' (In fact, the first Danish coronation was that of Knútr Valdimarsson in 1170, six years later than that of Magnús Erlingsson) (*Hkr* III 397 and n. 2).

CHAPTER 109

[351] The consecration of King Magnús took place, and he was seven years old then.⁸¹¹ King Valdamarr of Denmark was now a great enemy of Erlingr, because he had sworn legal oaths and yet broken all the terms of their settlement.

CHAPTER 110

The following autumn, and even early in the winter, emissaries of the king of Denmark came to Þrándheimr with letters. They laid the letters before men in power, together with friendly gifts that the king of Denmark had sent them. And the letters said that the king of Denmark intended to travel with his army into Norway; he meant to seize power in the country and claimed it as his inheritance. He promised the Þróendir his friendship, and that they would be such men in Norway as they had been in ancient times and as befitted their pedigrees; he said it was more than likely that he would appoint one of them as king or ruler of the land.

CHAPTER 111

Many responded well to this and sent letters in exchange for his tokens and promised allegiance to him, and finally the resolution was made that if Erlingr skakki grew so bold as to come in around Agðanes he would not escape with his life.

⁸¹¹ The coronation of Magnús was the first to take place on Scandinavian soil. In *Heimskringla* Magnús is said to be eight years old, dating the coronation to 1164; according to the reckoning of *Fagrskinna* it was 1163. The king's coronation oath, in Latin, pledging obedience to the Pope, survives in a manuscript from c. 1200 in the British Museum, as does a letter of privilege from a short time later in which the king is defined as a vassal of St Óláfr, following the model of the Capetian kings as vassals of St Denis. Both documents, together with the laws attempting to regulate the succession which are preserved in the *Gulapingslög*, are attributed to Archbishop Eysteinn (*Hkr* III 398 n. 1; Hoffmann 1990).

CHAPTER 112

Erlingr stayed in Björgvin for the winter with his troop. In the following spring his friends came to him and told him that the Þrændir were ill-disposed to him, giving as the reason for it [352] that he had killed Friðrekr kœna; they told him to be cautious and not to fall into the power of the Þrændir, because they had done whatever bold deeds they liked. Erlingr answered and said this was a big lie. In spring Erlingr set out south to the Ánarheimsþing and took the ship Bœkisúðin [Beech-planking], fully manned, with a fifteen-bench cutter, both well equipped. There was a constant southerly wind, and men got tired of pulling against the wind and objected to rowing, and said that Erlingr had no need to go there.

On Monday in Rogation-week⁸¹² after mass, Erlingr had trumpets blown to summon his troop to the ships, on pain of life and limb to any man entered on the list who did not come. He intended to put out from the town after nones (three p.m.), but he did not put out from the town until the next day, Tuesday, early in the morning, and all his troop was ready then. They rowed out into Byskupsneshöfn. Then Erlingr had a talk with his men and said this:

‘I hear you grumbling a lot that you don’t like rowing against the wind. Now take the mast and raise it, and let us see what the *longship* can do under sail.’

This was done; then they sailed north along the coast with a fair wind and continued through the following night and on Wednesday, and that night they sailed in around Agðanes, and then there was a great gathering of ships, because people were going into the town to observe the vigil.⁸¹³ They came up into the river largely unobserved. The townspeople saw the sails and thought they were among those observing the vigil, and the mass was sung at Christ Church, and most of the population of the town was present there.

⁸¹² *gagndagar*: The Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before Ascension Day, which falls on the Thursday of the sixth week after Easter. The name is a corruption of *gangdagar* ‘walking days’, which refers to the processions held on these days.

⁸¹³ *vökulið*: people attending the *vaka*, the vigil on the night before a saint’s day or other church festival (in this case Ascension Day).

CHAPTER 113

[353] Erlingr and his men got information about what was going on in the town, and Álfir was sitting drinking with his band, and Erlingr and his men went to where he was drinking and killed him and practically all the troop that was there. Then they went and ransacked and killed as they thought fit, anyone Erlingr had a grievance against. Some fled and so made their escape. Erlingr had trumpets blown to summon all the troop to the Eyraþing, and a large number of people attended there. Erlingr spoke and put his case against the Þrændir and said they were traitors against his life. They denied it and said that was a lie and a false rumour. Raza(Arse)-Bárðr denied the charges, for he was eloquent, with the result that Erlingr said that he would not press the charges against them if they opposed them with witnesses and oaths. Then Erlingr spoke and told his chaplain to stand up, and he did so.

He began to speak with these words: 'Do you recognise, Þrændir, this seal, which I believe you yourselves have had made, and put into the hands of Danish men?'

Then the letters were read, and they said that they had entered into a pact to kill the king and Erlingr if they could. And Erlingr said this when it was finished:

'These words, Raza-Bárðr, came out of your mouth.'

Bárðr replied, 'I repent of it now, my lord, if I did say that; but now all is in your power and God's.'

Now they all made a pledge to pay Erlingr such compensation as his mercy would permit. He had Álfir and all those who had fallen disqualified from compensation; he took a large amount of money from many and got no resistance at the time, and did not delay there at that time and went back south. But after that the Þrændir were his enemies forever.

King Valdamarr of the Danes set out with his army and had a large force and went from the east into the Vík, had a summons sent out to a meeting and demanded land and hospitality from the *bændr*. But the people who lived on the Elfr river in the east said that they wanted to serve the king they would choose north in the Vík. Now the king held the Borgarþing. The king advanced with restraint [354] and peaceably through the Vík, but the *bændr* had all gathered together further inland and would not submit. Now word was sent north as quickly as possible, and the news of war reached

Erlingr. Then he had a full levy of men and ships called out to defend the country. Then many longships were ready in every district. Then every longship was put to use even if it was not quite ready, and now a very large host of men gathered together, and the army moved from the north along the coast.

CHAPTER 114

Valdamarr got all the way to Túnsberg, and people said that the country people were so inflamed against them that whenever they came close to land, one or two men together ran up and shot at them, and it seemed to the king that that showed total hostility, and he said that he understood from it that they would not submit on any terms, and he considered that there were two alternatives, either to turn back to Denmark without further ado or to go along the coast with plundering and slaughter; he said he preferred not to raid in a Christian country and that there was a plentiful expanse lying east in the Baltic to raid and get oneself property; he expounded the situation and said that he would turn back south, and he did so; he went back to Denmark and gave leave to the *levies* to go home. Now Erlingr was told that the King of the Danes had turned back. Now he nominated *landed men* and other local chieftains to go with him and sailed south after the king and came to the place called Dýrsá, and there lay the army of the king of the Danes which had just been given leave to go home. Erlingr attacked and fought with them. There Sigurðr and many of the Danes fell, but they all fled. And Erlingr and his men took a very large booty and went back to Norway.

CHAPTER 115

[355] After that the king of the Danes banned the people of the Vík from making trading voyages to Denmark. He also banned the bringing to Norway of corn and other things which they found profitable. But the people of Vík could not do without the Danish market. Many asked Erlingr to make peace with the king of the Danes by some means. Erlingr achieved an exploit which all men reckon to have been the greatest anyone can remember: in this time

of danger he travelled to Denmark with a single ship, and arrived there very unexpectedly; they were wearing coats of mail and helmets with hoods over them and light mantles with drawn swords underneath, and they walked into the town and into the king's parlour. Then the king was sitting over a meal, unarmed. And no one took any notice of where they went until they came before the king.

Then Erlingr said, 'Good day, lord; give a truce to me and all my men.'

King Valdamarr said, 'You shall have safe conduct, Erlingr; I have never behaved shamefully to anyone who has come to see me. Say what you want, and then you and your men go as you came.'

Erlingr replied, 'Now you have granted safe conduct in advance, but I want to talk to you at more leisure, for I am bearing the business of King Magnús and the other rulers of Norway.'

Then Erlingr went to his ship.

He stayed there for a while and was often in the presence of the king of the Danes and asked for peace and reconciliation from him; he both adduced old precedents to the king and showed him how peace had been established between Denmark and Norway. He called to mind how Jarl Hákon inn ríki (the Great) had held the realm of Norway in fief from the King of the Danes. Erlingr received support from many people, and it came about at last that they decided that Erlingr would remain as a hostage with the king of the Danes until a settlement was made. Then the king of the Danes sent Ásbjörn snara (Snare) to Norway, and he stayed there over the winter. In the spring the king of the Danes gave Erlingr leave to go home on condition that letters should have come from King Magnús saying that [356] the king of the Danes was to have possession of as much of Norway as he laid claim to and as had been held in ancient times and as had been agreed between them privately.

CHAPTER 116

In exchange for the kingdom he gave Erlingr power, and a jarldom with it, and Erlingr was to be the jarl of King Valdamarr of the Danes. And Erlingr swore an oath of loyalty to him. When they parted the hostages of both sides went back, but Erlingr remained a jarl until he died, and kept to his friendship with the king of the Danes, and ruled and governed Norway alone on behalf of his son

King Magnús, and he became a powerful ruler, and he became a greater man than before as was commensurate with his higher rank.

CHAPTER 117

Óláfr was the name of the son of Guðbrandr Skafhoggsson and of Maria, daughter of Eysteinn Magnússon. He had been fostered by Sigurðr agnhǫttr (Bait-hood), a powerful man east in Vík. Óláfr, and Sigurðr with him, began an uprising with a force in the Vík. Many people joined in this enterprise, and headed up to Markir and moved on to Upplönd and were well-received there.

CHAPTER 118

A troop rapidly collected around them and they gathered great support, but they did not reach the sea, for the *landed men* and those who controlled the towns were wholehearted friends of King Magnús. And when Erlingr heard this about them, he responded by making arrangements to [357] guard the towns and fleet, but he went in to the Vík and was either in Ósló or Túnsberg, and stayed there for a while during the winter.

Óláfr had a feast prepared far inland. The jarl went to the feast at the invitation of a certain priest, and he had a very large troop, and the king's brother Ormr with him, and they came on the evening before Candlemas (2nd February) to a place called Ryðjökull. They had travelled across a certain lake, close to the shore of which the farm lay.

CHAPTER 119

They drank hard of strong beer during the evening; and the priest who was giving the feast had earlier sent information to Óláfr's band about the jarl's movements. Óláfr and his men travelled seven *leagues* during the evening and night, and people considered it amazing how quickly the distance was travelled.

CHAPTER 120

The jarl slept in a certain living-room with his followers, and he got up for matins at midnight, but the priest said it was still evening; he said he was unable to sleep; and it happened like this three times. And long before dawn the jarl got up and dressed, and told them to take up their weapons. Then the priest went to church. The jarl went to matins with his followers and the king's brother Ormr. But some were lying in their beds. And at dawn Óláfr and his men arrived, headed at once for the large hall, ran in there and killed those who were inside. Then they let out a war-cry, and the jarl had not been aware of the disturbance before that, and he at once ran out of the church and down to the ships. But it was so dark that they hardly recognised each other. Óláfr and his men chased them, and when the jarl's men were jumping over some fence, the jarl's men turned to meet them. The jarl was wearing a sword; he grasped [358] it and drew it, and the sword twisted against his side, and he cut himself badly. Ormr was seriously wounded, and much of their troop fell, but he himself and the king's brother Ormr got away, though with great difficulty, and rowed back across the lake. But Óláfr and his troop went on as before.

Afterwards people called him Óláfr ógæfa (Bad-luck), because the jarl had got away when they had rowed so close to him. And some time later Erlingr heard about Óláfr and his men being east in the Vík, and he went in pursuit of them and met them at the place called Stangir. There was a battle there, and the jarl had a bigger force, and he was also more victorious. Then Sigurðr agnhǫttr and many other men fell, and Óláfr fled ashore, and from then on the band dispersed; Óláfr went south to Denmark, took sick there and died at Áróss, and the Danes reckon him a saint.

CHAPTER 121

Haraldr was the name of the son of King Sigurðr Haraldsson; his mother was Princess Kristín, and he was the brother of King Magnús.⁸¹⁴

⁸¹⁴ That is, Haraldr and Magnús had the same mother: Kristín, daughter of Sigurðr jórsalafari.

He was fostered in Upplönd. Nikulás kuflungr (Cowl-wearer) took this boy and brought him to Erlingr. He was the most beautiful child, and the king received him warmly, and grew fond of him, and he and many others asked for mercy for him. But the jarl said that the king was not able to decide such things, and that it would soon be all up with him if he had any intention of putting such plans into practice, and said that everyone wanted to have this boy as king, but that he wanted him under an axe's mouth. And so it was brought about that that boy was killed, and that deed was greatly condemned.

CHAPTER 122

[359] In the kingdom of King Magnús there arose a band that had collected together in the east in Markir. Its leader was said to be Eysteinn, son of King Eysteinn Haraldsson. He was a good-looking man. He was called Eysteinn meyla (Little Maid). Many able men came to join that band. They said that they had lost their brothers and fathers and other close kinsmen, and their property; mostly young men, more proved in bold deeds than in wisdom.

CHAPTER 123

But because they had no great strength of numbers they kept moving about from place to place, and especially in uninhabited areas, so that their clothes fell off them until they were all barelegged and tied birch-bark around their legs. And when Magnús's men heard that, they called them Birkibeinar (Birch-legs).⁸¹⁵ They travelled about a lot in the east round Markir and poured down into the Vík, came out where the *bændr* had gathered against them in the east in Elfásýslur, and made forays against them, each side against the other, and men were killed as a result. The Birkibeinar always came off best whenever

⁸¹⁵ According to Snorri (*Hkr* III 411) this band began to come together to support Eysteinn meyla's claim against King Magnús when Eysteinn was staying with Jarl Birgir of Gautland (Götaland), who was married to a daughter of Haraldr gilli. After their defeat at the battle of Ré the remnants of the band became the faction that brought the Faroese pretender, Sverrir, to power.

there was no crowd against them, but when they had frequent encounters, the *bændr* nearly always got away quickly. The *bændr* felled logs before them at Krókaskógr; they were close to disaster there, and lost their men, and escaped by running away. They had no dealings with king or jarl or nobility.

CHAPTER 124

The following winter they travelled around with the band, but in the third summer they found ships for themselves and got *cutters* and light craft and went by the outer route along the coast all the way north to Þrándheimr. [360] They seized people and property far and wide, and came to Kaupangr so very unexpectedly that all who were there were unprepared. That was on the Second Feast of Mary (8th September), before high mass.

CHAPTER 125

Eiríkr Dagsson went up to church and met his father-in-law Nikulás Skjaldvararson,⁸¹⁶ and told him that some fishermen had come to the town who said that they had seen their many sails coming in along the fjord, ‘and I think it must be the Birkibeinar’.

Nikulás replied, ‘You are too swayed by gossip, son-in-law; you go along with every rumour flying around among fishermen. I expect they are more likely to be in the east in Markir than coming here into the arms of us Þrændir; let us celebrate Mass first, and then send out a *cutter* if you like.’

Nikulás went to church, but Eiríkr had scouts sent out.

CHAPTER 126

The Birkibeinar arrived, very unexpectedly, when Mass had been sung. Then Eiríkr went in and told him that those who had gone out for news felt certain that there was hostility.

⁸¹⁶ In *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III 412–13) it is made clear that Nikulás is the son of a half-sister of King Magnús. His son in law is named there as Eiríkr Arnason.

‘Horses are ready now,’ he said; ‘let us ride away, father-in-law, out into the country.’

Nikulás said, ‘I will hold a meeting with the townspeople and see what troops and weapons are in the town. But let us first go to dinner.’

After that Eiríkr turned away into his premises, and he and his men mounted their horses and rode out of the town, while Nikulás [361] went to table, and had a watch kept out on Eyrar. But before he had finished his meal he was told that they had come up into the river. Then Nikulás said that they should arm themselves and make their way up into his large upper room, and they did so. The Birkibeinar went through the streets, and some round the quays, and so came into Nikulás’s place; the first thing they knew was that the courtyard was all empty of men, and no one could come to their help. The Birkibeinar called out to them and offered Nikulás quarter, but he refused. After that the Birkibeinar attacked the loft both with missiles and with fighting at close quarters, and some⁸¹⁷ chopped down the buildings and shot at them. They defended themselves well with missiles, and stones were thrown at them, and men fell on both sides. It turned out in the end that the loft was won. There Nikulás and a large company of men fell.⁸¹⁸

CHAPTER 127

After that the Birkibeinar held a meeting in the town, and all the townspeople submitted to them. And Eysteinn was adopted as king at the Eyrarþing. He stayed there for a while and numerous people came there and swore allegiance to him. There were both townsmen and people who came from the countryside; a choice body of men. Then the Saltnessveinar, Jón kettlingr (Kitten) and his brothers, came to join the band. And the following autumn, they went with the band into Þrándheimr, and subjected it all to them. Then Þorfiðr of Snqs, his son Helgi, and many other powerful men joined the band. And it is quite true to say that all the best sons of *bændr* came

⁸¹⁷ *sumir*: *Fsk* (ÍF XXIX) has the misprint *sumit*.

⁸¹⁸ Theodoricus (Theodoricus 1998, 50) alludes to the killing of Nikulás at the hands of Eysteinn.

to them then from all over Þrændalög, so that they numbered, as they came back out into Orkadahlr, almost twenty *hundred* (2400) men.

CHAPTER 128

[362] Now they set out on their way up to the mountain and so travelled to Upplönd, subjecting all the country to them. King Magnús was in the Vík with his brother Ormr and many of the *landed men*. But Erlingr was in Björgvin and had a large force. The Birkibeinar headed out into the Vík and directed their course by the inland route around the country; they intended to go on to Túnsberg to find King Magnús, and that was around the time of Christmas. But when King Magnús had news of them, he summoned his forces to him. Then the king's brother Ormr came to him with his troops, and many others. He had a large force. The king went out of the town to meet them and all the way up to Ré; then he had intelligence that the Birkibeinar had come close, but the weather was extraordinarily cold, with so much snow that one sank deep into it as soon as one left the roads.

CHAPTER 129

King Magnús's men trampled the snow hard above the town, and arranged the troops in formation across the road. Now the Birkibeinar advanced in formation towards the town, and prepared to fight when they saw the king's army before them. King Eysteinn's banner was in the forefront of the army, but since the carriage-way was not broad and the going was narrow ahead of them, the group which accompanied the king's banner was in the lead, and they were first to come out onto the trampled snow. And King Magnús's men ran forward against them in a body. Then the battle began and it was difficult for the Birkibeinar to get at them, and the troop got very scattered, for they had no room on the trampled snow. Soon the loss of men became heavier on their side, and those Birkibeinar who were farthest in front fell. Then King Magnús's men advanced. Then it happened, as it often does, that even if men are bold and use weapons bravely, [363] it is of little use once flight has broken out. Then the main body of Eysteinn's men took to flight. Then again

the casualties began to be heavier on their side, because the road was narrow, and King Magnús's men were not much in the mood for peace. Almost all that they could catch were killed, and they pursued those who fled a long way.

Eysteinn was among those who fled, and when he had had such a narrow escape he ran into a house and asked for quarter. But the man who was inside said he was going to do what he was keener to do, and killed him. Then King Magnús's men soon found him, and his body was taken and carried into the room King Magnús was in. A fire had been kindled in the middle of the floor, and the king had taken off his clothes and was warming himself by the fire. Then people went to see whose the body was, some of the Birkibeinar who were too badly wounded to run. And when the body was clearly recognised, the king turned away from the fire. But a man was sitting on the dais behind them, and no notice was taken of him. But just when they least expected it, he stood up and grasped an axe and struck at King Magnús over the shoulders of several people; the blow reached the king's neck, and twisted down into the shoulders and caught the bone slightly, and that was a bad wound; at once he took another swing and struck at the king's brother Ormr, and aimed at his leg up by the knee. And when Ormr saw that, he thrust his legs forward over his head, and the blow went into the edge of the dais and the axe stuck fast there. Then both mighty blows and thrusts rained down, but when he fell it was found on the dais where he had been standing that he had been dragging his intestines behind him over the floor.

CHAPTER 130

That band that escaped fled east to Markir, and most went east to Gautland, mainly because they saw no prospect of peace for themselves in Norway, any more than for those others who [364] had become full-blown enemies of Erlingr. But another reason was that in Sweden were Jarl Birgir and his wife; he had married Brigða, daughter of Haraldr gilli, and he had given great support to King Eysteinn in the form both of troops and of gifts of money.

Now I leave off here.

APPENDIX I: ADDITIONS TO THE A-TEXT OF *FAGRSKINNA*1. *Concerning Dagr inn fróði (the Wise)*

[365] There was a man called Dagr who lived at the farm in Haðaland that is called Þengilsstaðir. And he was called Dagr inn fróði, and was a powerful *hersir*. Dagr inn fróði had two children, a son and a daughter. His son was called Guðpormr inn ráðspaki (the Sagacious), and people said that they knew no young man more promising in his intelligence than Guðpormr. His daughter was called Helga in siðláta (the Virtuous); some called her Helga in háprúða (the Glorious-haired). It was also said of Helga that no one then knew another woman who was of greater nobility or of better appearance or behaviour than Helga was. King Hálfðan fell in love with Helga and asked to marry her, and he did marry her and had a son with her of whom many men have heard tell, who was called Haraldr inn hárfagri (Finehair). Even in his childhood Haraldr achieved great popularity both because of his beauty and because of the kindness with which he treated everybody. King Hálfðan became a popular man in his realm, because he was a powerful and wise man, and no one knew of a more propitious king than he was.

2. *Concerning an unfortunate event*

There took place on one occasion an unfortunate event. It happened in spring at the time when ice begins to melt on the lakes. Then the king had gone to a feast in the settlement called Brandabúi in [366] Haðaland. And he left the feast with a large company. Then they drove onto the ice on the lake called Rqnd. And they came to the place called Rœkinsvík. Then the ice cracked under him and under his horse. And as soon as they saw that, they all wanted to save the king, and a great throng of drunken men crowded around there. The ice broke all the more, and more extensively, and the king got no help from the drunken men other than that he perished there with his father-in-law Dagr inn fróði, and some twenty men with them. This was considered bad news by all those who heard of it, for he was a propitious and popular man. And so great had been the prosperity during the king's reign that as soon as they found his body they divided it up, and his entrails were buried at Þengilsstaðir in Haðaland, and his body was buried at Steinn in Hringaríki, and

his head was taken to Skírnssalur in Vestfold and buried there. And they divided his body because they believed that his propitiousness would always remain with him whether he was alive or dead.

3. *Here is told of the property of Ragna*

Ragna in rikuláta (the Magnificent) was the name of a girl who then owned almost all of the district which is called Þótn and known as Land, and all of the island that is now called Eyn byggða. It was also said about Ragna that she was the fairest of all girls. Ragna was the daughter of Aðils inn auðgi (the Wealthy). Aðils was son of Ása the daughter of Þóra. And Þóra was the daughter of King Eysteinn and of Ástriðr, daughter of King Aðils who was called Aðils svarti (the Black). But Aðils, Ragna's father, was dead then, and Ragna was his only child. And King Haraldr was twelve years old at this time, and Ragna was also twelve years old then, the same age as Haraldr. And Haraldr fell deeply in love with Ragna. And when Haraldr made known his love to Ragna, [367] she answered in this manner:

‘This I will say for certain, that I am not worthy of a better suitor than you. This is because of both your kingly birth and also the kingly bearing and beauty that you possess. And yet before I bestow all my love on you, I want to be certain of this: whether the heirs of your kinsman Neriðr inn ráðspaki (the Wise in Counsel) are to be you, my lord king, or the sons of Gandálfr.’

Then Haraldr, angry, answered and said this: ‘I expected, Ragna, that you would be led with great honour to my bed for the sake of love, but because you have taunted me in this way, you now deserve to be led to my bed like a poor whore.’

Now Ragna speaks to the king

Ragna said this to the king: ‘You must not, my lord king, be angry if I speak in fun, and it does not befit your kingly rank to quarrel with women, and still less with a small girl such as I am; rather it befits you, my lord king, to quarrel with the other kings who are now established within the whole of the land. I will also tell you that if I myself had to decide, I would be neither your mistress nor any other man's, and either I will have for my husband the one who makes all Norwegian men his subjects or I will have none.’

When King Haraldr heard these words, he made a vow, swearing

by his head that he would have no wife in Norway except Ragna, and yet with the condition that he had made all men in Norway his subjects. He added that the woman who had such splendid speech in her mouth as Ragna had was more worthy of marrying an excellent king than some local yeoman.

Concerning new laws

[368] Then Haraldr made new laws concerning women, that if any man took a woman by force there would be a charge against him punishable by a fine, and he would have to pay forty marks of six ells¹ to be free of the charge. And any woman who lies with a man in secret shall be taken into the custody of the king and lose her freedom until she is released by the payment of three marks of six ells. 'And I am establishing this law so that every woman who wants be virtuous will have it within her own control to maintain her chastity against every man. But the woman who wants to behave badly will pay for her unchastity according to the stipulation I have now made.

I also promise that I shall not offer sacrifice to any god whom now men worship except that one alone who created the sun and ordered the earth and created it. And since I am concerning myself with becoming sole king in Norway and subjecting to myself all other kings, who until now have been both strong and powerful, I must put my faith in every way in the one who is most powerful and controls all. And no man will have my full friendship who worships any other god than that one, for I believe I know for a fact that that god who has no greater dominion than one stone or one forest cannot help me or anyone else. I am only a man, and I know that I must die like other men, and I recognise that I have an ambitious spirit. And if I knew that I would live for ever, as I know that a god does, I would not be satisfied before I had subjected the whole world to myself and to my rule. Therefore it is significant, concerning these gods, that if they had any divinity or power about them, they would not be satisfied with such a small domain as to rule one stone or a little grove. Therefore every man of intelligence,

¹ *Þórá tigr mörk sex álna eyris*: The *ell* (plural *álnar*) 'ell' of *vaðmál* 'homespun cloth' was used as a monetary standard. A piece of *vaðmál* six ells long corresponded to a legal *eyrir* (plural *aurar*) 'ounce (of silver)'; there were eight *aurar* to a *mörk* (Gelsinger 1981, 35–37).

who has got any wisdom, must bring himself to understand,' said the king, 'that the only true god is the one who has created all things; he alone can [369] give real help to men, because he created man as well as everything else. I will devote myself to that while I live, so that as my mind is devoted to the one who is more powerful than them all, I hope also that by his support I shall become more powerful than all the petty kings that are now in Norway.'

But when Guðþormr, King Haraldr's kinsman, heard these words, Guðþormr stood up and spoke when he had a hearing before all the court of King Haraldr and many *bændr* and a large assembly of other men, and this meeting was in Haðaland on the eighth day of Yule, and Guðþormr began his speech in this way: 'I hardly suppose men have ever heard before such wise words from the mouths of two children who are no more than twelve years old as we have now heard from the mouths of King Haraldr and Ragna Aðilsdóttir. But it can certainly be truly said that no man, either young or old, has heard in our days words that can be thought as becoming as those spoken by King Haraldr today, and he has said some which will greatly increase the toil of those who want to follow him, beyond what any of his kinsmen before him have done, although they have all been men of strife; but because the speech of King Haraldr has become so authoritative, there is now no parting from his service while life endures for any man who has previously served him or his kinsmen until it has been proved whether what King Haraldr has said can be completely and prosperously fulfilled.'

Concerning a certain oath

At the same place Guðþormr swore by his head that he would never part from King Haraldr as long as he lived, and worship no other god than the one who [370] controls all. King Haraldr on that day gave his kinsman Guðþormr the dominion that Skjöldr had ruled over and which at that time was called Óðinssalr, and with it the bay that was called Saltvík, which is now called Æslvé, and with it all the coasts that were called Saltvíkarstrandir. King Haraldr gave his kinsman Guðþormr that dominion all the way east to Svínasund, and he made Guðþormr *hertogi* over it.

APPENDIX II: GENEALOGIES INTERPOLATED IN THE B-TEXT
OF *FAGRSKINNA*

[370] The children of Skúli konungsfóstri and Guðrún were Ásúlfr of Rein and Ragnhildr, whom Kyrpinga-Ormr married. The daughter of Kyrpinga-Ormr was Ása, mother of Björn bokkr (Buck). The children of Ásúlfr and Þóra Skoptadóttir were Guðþormr of Rein and Sigríðr, whom Hallkell húkr (Croucher) married. Their son was Jóan, father of Hallkell and Rognvaldr and Gregoris. Guðþormr of Rein first married Eldríðr, sister of Hallkell húkr. Their daughters were Rangríðr and Ingiríðr and Guðrún. Rangríðr was married to Bjarni byrðasveinn. Their daughters were Eldríðr and Ingibjörg. The daughter of King Magnús and Eldríðr was Kristín, whom Hreiðarr sendimaðr (Messenger) married. Þórir skinnfeldr (Leather-cloak) had been married to Eldríðr. Their¹ sons were Kynaðr and Þorgrímr klaufi (Boor). Afterwards she was married to the law-speaker in Gautland. Their son was Haraldr. Ingibjörg's sons were Þorsteinn skálmöld (Sword-age) and his brothers. Rangríðr was afterwards married to Friðrekr kœna. Their daughter was Ástriðr and she was a nun. Ingiríðr, daughter of Guðþormr of Rein, was married to Guðþormr Austmannsson (Easterner's son) from Jamtaland in the east. Guðþormr of Rein later married Bergljót. Their son was Ásúlfr, father of Þorbjörg, whom Eiríkr gryfill (Stoop) married. Their son was Ásúlfr. Later Hróarr konungsfrændi (King's kinsman) married Þorbjörg. Guðþormr of Rein later married Sigríðr, daughter of [371] Þorkell and Hallkatla. Hallkatla was the daughter of Sveinn Brynjúlfsson, brother of Serkr of Sogn, and of Ingiríðr, sister of King Knútr inn ríki (the Great) of the Danes. Bárðr Guðþormsson married first Úlfhildr, daughter of Bishop Páll, and next Cecilia, daughter of King Sigurðr. Their son was King Ingi.

Here begins the list of Arnsmæðlingar (descendants of Arnsmóðr)

There was a man called Finnviðr fundinn (Found). He was found in an eagle's nest wrapped in silk swaddling-clothes, and no one knew his descent. From him is descended all the family known as

¹ Up to this point the manuscript fragment has been followed (see note 695).

the Arnungaætt. His son was Þórarinn bullibak (Hothead), father of Arnviðr, father of Jarl Arnmóðr. From him is descended the family who are called Arnmœðlingar. His son was called Árni. The sons of Árni were Kálfr of Eggja, Þorbergr, Þorbjörn, Jarl Finn and Árni. Þorbergr Árnason married Ástriðr in árborna (the Legitimate), daughter of Erlingr of Sóli and of Ástriðr Tryggvadóttir, sister of Óláfr Tryggvason. Árni Árnason married Geirþrúðr, sister of Ástriðr in árborna. These were the children of Þorbergr Árnason: Eysteinn orri, Qgmundr, Þóra and Jórunn. King Haraldr Sigurðarson married Þóra. Their sons were King Magnús, father of King Hákon the foster-son of Steigar-Þórir, and King Óláfr, who was called búandi. He was the father of Magnús berfœttr. He was the father of King Sigurðr, Jórsala-Sigurðr (Jerusalem-Sigurðr), and of King Eysteinn and King Óláfr, King Haraldr and Sigurðr slembidjárn and Magnús rauði (the Red), and of Þóra. The child of King Sigurðr was King Magnús, who was called Borghildarson. His mother was Borghildr, daughter of Óláfr of Dalir. Magnús married Kristín, daughter of Knútr lávarðr. They had [372] no children. The daughter of King Sigurðr and Málfríðr Haraldsdóttir was Kristín, whom Jarl Erlingr married. Their children were King Magnús and Ragnhildr whom Hallkell Jóansson married. The daughter of King Eysteinn Magnússon was Maria whom Guðbrandr Skafhoggsson married. Their son was Óláfr, who was called ógæfa (Bad-luck). The children of King Haraldr gilli were King Ingi and King Sigurðr, King Eysteinn and King Magnús, Birgitt, whom Magnús, half-brother of King Ingi (by the same mother), married, but later Jarl Birgir brosa (Smile) married her. Their children were Jarl Philippus and Jarl Knútr and Ingigerðr, whom King Sverkir married. Their son was King Jóan. The children of King Sigurðr were King Hákon and King Sverrir, Sigurðr Markússfóstri (Foster-son of Markús) and Cecilia, whom Folkviðr lögmaðr (Law-speaker) had previously married. The children of King Sverrir were King Hákon, father of King Hákon, and Sigurðr lávarðr, father of King Guðþormr, and Kristín, whom King Philippus married, and Cecilia, whom first Einarr and then Gregoris kirk married. The son of Folkviðr and of King Sigurðr's daughter Cecilia was Jarl Hákon. He married Lady Kristín, and their son was Jarl Knútr. Later Bárðr son of Guðþormr of Rein married Cecilia. Their son was King Ingi, father of Guðþormr. Loptr the priest married Þóra, daughter of King Magnús berfœttr. Their son was Jóan, father of Bishop Páll, Sæmundr and Ormr. The daughter of Sigurðr slembidjárn was Ingigerðr, whom

Hákon kló (Claw) married. Their sons were Hávarðr halti (Lame), Sigurðr, Haraldr, Eiríkr.

Ogmundr son of Þorbergr Árnason was the father of Skopti of Gizki. These were Skopti's children: Ogmundr, Þórðr, Finnrr, Páll, Ragnhildr, Þóra whom Ásúlfr Skúlason married. Their son was Guðþormr of Rein, father of Bárðr, father of King Ingi, Duke Skúli, Guðþormr and Sigríðr. The children of Duke Skúli were Queen Margreta whom King Hákon is married to, [373] Ingiríðr, Rangríðr. The son of Páll Skoptason was Nikulás kúfungr, father of Páll fliða and Ragnhildr. The daughter of Ásúlfr and Þóra Skoptadóttir was Sigríðr, mother of Jóan Hallkelsson, father of Gregoris. Dagr Eilífsson married Ragnhildr Skoptadóttir. Their children were Gregoris, Gyriðr, Baugeiðr, Sigríðr, whom Halldórr Brynjúlfsson of Vettalönd married. Gunnarr was the name of Gregoris's son. Úlfr stallari married Jórunn Þorbergsdóttir. Their children were Jóan sterki (Strong) and Brigða. The son of Jóan was Erlendr himaldi, father of Archbishop Eysteinn and of Þorbergr, father of Erlendr. Brigða's son was Sauða-Úlfr (Sheep-Úlfr), father of Pétur byrðasveinn, father of Úlfr flý (Splinter) and of Sigríðr, mother of Archbishop Pétur. The daughter of Jarl Finnrr Árnason was Ingibjörg jarlamóðir (Mother of Jarls), whom Jarl Þorfinnr Sigurðarson married. Their sons were Jarl Páll and Jarl Erlendr, father of Jarl Magnús inn helgi (the Saint) and of Erlingr and Gunnhildr, mother of Jarl Rognvaldr, father of Ingigerðr, whom Eiríkr stagbrellr married. Their sons were Jarl Haraldr, who fell at Vík, and Magnús mangi, who fell at Sogn. Jarl Páll Þorfinnsson married the daughter of Jarl Hákon Ívarsson. Their son was Jarl Hákon. His children were Jarl Páll and Jarl Haraldr, father of Jarl Erlendr who fell at Daminsey, Ingibjörg and Margreta. Óláfr Suðureyjakonungur (king of the Hebrideans) married Ingibjörg, and Jarl Maddaðr married Margreta. Their sons were Jarl Haraldr, father of Jarl Jóan and Jarl Davíð. The son of Árni Árnason was Jóan of Bjarkey, father of Sigurðr hundr (Hound) and Víðkunnr, father of Erlingr, father of Víðkunnr and of Ragna, whom Bjarni Marðarson married.

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GLOSSARY

The following list gives explanations of frequently occurring words that are left untranslated in the text (others are explained in the footnotes). Words that are translated but require further explanation are also listed here, alongside their Old Norse forms. These words are normally italicised in the text.

- after-deck* (*lypting*), a raised area in the back stem of the ship (Jesch 2001, 153): 126, 155, 199, 213, 247, 261
- amidships* (*fyrirrúm*), ‘space in front’, the area on a ship immediately in front of the raised after-deck (*lypting*). The adverb *miðskipa* is also translated as ‘amidships’: 107, 126, 155, 156, 212, 214, 263
- bóndi*, *búandi*, pl. *bændr*, often translated ‘farmer’, but more properly the head of a household whose independence, defined by ownership of land and/or stock, qualified him to participate in legal assemblies: 56, 61, 79, 83, 100, 102, 110, 114, 131, 140, 153, 157, 160, 166, 168, 171, 172, 180, 194, 205, 207, 216, 231, 240, 241, 253, 259, 280, 282, 287, 291, 292, 299, 301
- cutter* (*skúta*), a small craft used in rivers and coastal waters; the reference to a 15-bench cutter (p. 285) is a standard indication of size: 109, 139, 155, 156, 213, 220, 265, 268, 285, 292
- dragon-ship* (*drekki*), a particularly large and ornate warship, with carved dragon-heads on the prow or both stems; possibly originally a poetic term (Jesch 2001, 127–28): 119, 194, 206, 211, 257, 274
- drápa*, pl. *drápur*, a formally constructed poem, usually with at least one *stef* (refrain): 87, 104, 147, 189, 239
- duke* (*hertogi*), usually rendering a foreign title. Duke Skúli (referred to on p. 302) was the first Norwegian *hertogi*, receiving the title in 1237: 144, 177, 190, 299, 302
- flokkr*, a loosely constructed poem, or series of verses: 123, 144, 171, 203
- fylki*, see *shire*
- galley* (*gáleiðr*), a foreign word, from *galliot*, diminutive of medieval Latin *galea*; a small craft used for swift navigation. The word is used particularly of Mediterranean vessels: 183, 188, 190, 253
- gestr*, pl. *gestir*, literally ‘guest’; the *gestir* were a division of the king’s men, lower in status than the *hirdmenn* (retainers): 240, 260
- halberd* (*kesja*), a spear used for thrusting rather than throwing: 63, 66, 225, 228, 267
- hersir*, pl. *hersar*, patriarchal and hereditary chieftain in the early period in Norway, the term later equivalent to and eventually replaced by *lendr maðr*: 79, 132, 296
- humorous verses* (*gamanvísur*): 190
- hundred* (*hundrað*), It is rarely clear whether this should be interpreted as meaning the ‘long hundred’, i.e. 120. Only once (p. 197) is the long hundred specified: *hundrað vetr tólfrætt*. Throughout this translation ‘hundred’ is rendered literally in the modern sense, with the alternative figure based on the ‘long hundred’ in parentheses. See Magnús Már Láruson, ‘Hundrað’, *KLNM* 7, 83–87: 47, 83, 89, 102, 136, 153, 159, 197, 203, 208, 209, 210, 211, 234, 240, 241, 260, 274, 276, 277, 278, 280, 294
- landed man* (*lendr maðr*, pl. *lendir menn*): a man holding land in fief from the king, next

- in rank to a jarl in Norway: 103, 132, 146, 150, 152, 160, 205, 209, 210, 224, 243, 245, 251, 253, 259, 260, 264, 268, 280, 281, 287, 289, 294
- league* (*røst*, pl. *rastir*), an itinerary measure of distance, the distance between two 'rests'; probably 4–5 miles: 178, 289
- levy* (*leiðangr*), a levy of ships, men and provisions called out in times of war; the account in *Fagrskinna* and other sources of the establishing of the levy by Hákon inn góði is probably anachronistic. Twelve ships were levied from each *fylki* (shire); see Malmros 1993: 62, 63, 64, 85, 88, 90, 94, 146, 153, 168, 176, 196, 198, 199, 200, 202, 203, 207, 210, 216, 237, 238, 259, 287
- longship* (*langskip*), a general rather than technical term for a warship; in one instance (p. 154) it is used synonymously with *skeið* (Jesch 2001, 123): 83, 99, 102, 108, 115, 120, 139, 154, 158, 181, 211, 212, 242, 259, 268, 280, 285, 287
- lypting* (see *after-deck*): 155
- marshal* (*stallari*), the title for this royal official dates from the reign of King Óláfr Tryggvason: 126, 127, 160, 189, 209, 211, 212, 220, 231, 240, 250, 302
- merchant ship* (*knörr*), broader than a warship, for carrying heavy cargoes (Jesch 2001, 128–32): 102, 136
- paðreims leikr*, 'hippodrome games', horse- and chariot-races: 256
- ráðgjafi*, counsellor: 240
- sheriff* (*greifi*): 171
- shire* (*fylki*): administrative district in Norway, ruled by a *fylkir*: 145, 153, 168, 200, 220, 237
- skeið*, warship, apparently larger than a *snekkja*, though the words are used indiscriminately of the same ship pp. 137–38 (Jesch 2001, 123–26): 118, 137, 140, 154, 155, 156
- snekkja*, pl. *snekkjur*, small warship, defined by Falk as having twenty benches (i.e. pairs of rowers) (Falk 1912, 102), but clearly sometimes larger (*Hkr* I 319, Jesch 2001, 126–27): 138, 139
- stallari*, see *marshal*
- stef*, refrain
- yeoman* (*høldr*): legal term denoting a landowner of lower status than a *hersir* or *landed man*: 298
- Yule* (*Jól*), name of the pagan midwinter festival, later applied to Christmas (see note 237). In the translation *Jól* is rendered 'Yule' in pagan contexts, 'Christmas' in the Christian period: 44, 99, 138, 139, 159, 179, 218, 242, 255, 260, 263, 273, 280, 294, 299
- þingamaðr*, pl. *þingamenn*; probably derived from Old English *þeningmann* 'serving man', member of a troop established in England by Knútr inn ríki; see note 637: 219, 220
- þndvegi*, 'facing seat', raised seat, one on each side of the middle of the hall, occupied by the host and guest of honour: 240

INDEX OF PLACES AND PEOPLES

Place-names are given in the Icelandic forms in which they appear in the translated text, with the modern form, if any, in parentheses. Most non-Scandinavian names and names of states, which are given English forms in the translation, appear so also in this index (e.g. Norway, London), with the Icelandic form, italicized, in parentheses. Place-names occurring in the translated verses, but not represented as such in the original verses, are not included in the index; neither are mythological names (e.g. Valhöll), which are explained in the footnotes. Names occurring in the explanations of the locations are given in the form in which they appear in this list or on the maps.

Names are listed according to the following alphabetical order: a, á, b, c, d, ð, e, é, f, g, h, i, í, j, k, l, m, n, o, ó, p, r, s, t, u, ú, v, w, x, y, ý, þ, æ, œ, q, ø

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 Barrvík, unknown harbour, possibly near Baråkra, Blekinge (Bleking), south-east Sweden: 150
 Bataldr (Batalden), island off Firðir (Fjordane): 267
 Beltissund (Storebælt 'Great Belt'), sea between Fjón and Sjóland, Denmark: 151

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- Dinnuxstaðir: 277
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- Eikundasund (Egersund), west Egðafylki: 154
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- Elfr, Gautelfr (Götaälv), river forming a boundary between Norway and Sweden: 142, 170, 175, 176, 203, 204, 205, 249, 267, 275, 286
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